



INDO-ISRAEL RELATIONS SINCE 1992

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BY

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

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*Dedicated to my
Beloved Parents
and
Respected Brothers*

Prof. S. Shamir Hassan



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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "*Indo-Israel Relations Since 1992*" is an original work carried out by *Mr. Peer Zada Baha-ud-Din*, under my supervision.

The present work is suitable to be submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in West Asian Studies (Political Science), Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Shamir', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof. S. Shamir Hassan

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Preface

The unfortunate partition of Palestine on November 29, 1947 led to the creation of the Zionist state of Israel on May 14, 1948. India had very strongly opposed this move at the United Nations and had also objected to Israel's membership in it. However, in 1950 India accorded de-jure recognition to the state of Israel. But, the diplomatic relations for which Israel regularly approached the Indian government was not established.

After a gap of forty-two years the diplomatic relations between India and Israel were established in 1992 during Prime Minister Mr. Narsimha Rao's rule. However, the turning point in Indo-Israel relations came in 1998 when the Bhartiya Janta Party came to power. The BJP made a paradigm shift from cultivating the Arab-world towards a strategic partnership with Israel. It assiduously cultivated Israel as a friend and a military partner.

Since 1998, there are constant Indo-Israel contacts on various levels, especially in the realm of cooperation in the purchasing of Israeli arms. National interest, however, does not require the government to grovel before Israel. In the past few years, the NDA government led by the BJP has systematically dismantled the entire edifice of the independent foreign policy based on non-alignment, which was created in the post-independent period.

The present thesis entitled, "*Indo-Israel Relations Since 1992*" covers all the phases of Indo-Israel relationship since Israel's prestate status to the present times. The thesis has been divided into six chapters.

The introductory chapter is devoted to explain the, Indian National Congress's stand on Palestine question, Gandhi and Nehru's

thinking regarding the Palestine question, United Nation's Partition of Palestine, India's stand at the UN and finally the recognition of Israel by India.

In the second chapter an attempt has been made to examine, India's viewpoint pertaining to Arab-Israeli wars, Janata party and its relations with Israel, India and the Gulf War of 1991 and finally the extension of diplomatic relations to Israel by Narshima Rao government.

The third chapter sheds light on the aspects of, India and the regional military pacts, India's military relations with Israel since 1992 to 1997. India's military relations with Israel during BJP government and finally Arab response to growing Indo-Israeli military relationship.

The fourth chapter has been devoted to discuss, agricultural, cultural, trade, science and technological cooperation between India and Israel. The last part of this chapter consists an analysis drawing comparison between Indo-Arab and Indo-Israeli trade relations.

In the fifth chapter, the ideological affinity between the Zionists, the Janasangh and the BJP, BJP's relations with Israel after 1998, Jaswant Singh and Advani's visits to Israel, BJP's support to US in the 'Global War on Terror' and the visit of Brajesh Mishra to Washington have been critically analyzed.

The sixth chapter is the conclusion where analytical viewpoints have been expressed in the light of facts and arguments brought forth in the preceding chapters.

Chapter-1

Introduction

India and West Asia: A Historical Perspective:

Our natural tendency to assume that what exists today has always been, can only afford us psychic solace, at the terrible cost of denying reality. The tendency to deny historical reality on our part would perhaps destroy our capacity to understand and react meaningfully to the present.

Hence, in a study dealing with Indo-Israel relations-present phase an attempt has been made to briefly survey overall India-West Asia relations with special emphasis on Palestine in historical perspective in order to relate the past to its present circumstances.

West Asia occupies a very significant position in the world politics particularly since the second half of the 20th century. Its geographical factor has great significance because no other region is as strategically located as West Asia¹. It is a land bridge, which links three continents Asia, Africa and Europe. It is called the gateway of Asia-Africa and the back door of Europe. It commands three seas - the Mediterranean, the Red and the Arabian. It is a centre of international trade to different regions. It is also called the lifeline of Europe. Arab nationalism, Western imperialism and Zionism are the main factors that have conditioned the West Asian politics². The creation of Israel and the subsequent three wars have made the region a cockpit of world politics.

In ancient times, Indians had experiences of contact with West Asian region .For a long time, Indian and Arab civilizations have interacted with each other and have drawn inspirations from each other. The Nile Delta civilization of Egypt, the Euphrates River civilization in Mesopotamia and the Indus valley civilization in India were not only contemporaneous, but were also in close contact with one another-each contributing in its own way to the enrichment of human life and culture for the other. History is strewn with the evidences of mutually advantageous relations between the two regions. For example, it was the Indian muslin, which the Egyptians used to wrap the mummies. Similarly, it was the Arab craftsmanship, which is believed to have produced figurines for the Indian temples and buildings³.

Several evidences have been found from historical records that India had close relationship with West Asia in various fields. Such as Culture, commerce, religion, medicines and politics. During the time of King Solomon, son of King David, a port of Etzion-Gber was built at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. It seems that from there he carried out trade with Arabia, Africa and India⁴. Solomon also made voyage to the east every three years. The destination of his expedition was called Ophir, which was identified as Sopora near Bombay, from where they brought gold, precious stones, peacocks and almug trees⁵. His fleet was

built by Hiram of Lebanon⁶. The argument has been strengthened by testifying some Hebrew words which are to be of Indian origin, like koph monkey (Sanskrit kapi) and Tukki peacock (Tamil togai)⁷.

Christian tradition also holds that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, who was a Jew, came to India and preached the gospel to the Indians before he died a martyr's death at the hands of a king called in Christian tradition Misdeos. This could be possible because traveling from Palestine to India was not totally unknown⁸. Christian faith from Palestine found a way to India, which is still evident today. Not only Christians but Jews also had settled in Kerala. The king of the Cheras, Bhaskara Ravivarman, made the earliest reference to this community, in the 10th century charter by which a Jew named Joseph Rabban was given lands and privileges. However, there are other views which push the date back to the first century A.D. whatever might be the case, it is a fact that Jewish community has existed in India for many centuries. One branch was called as Beni Israel⁹. This community has lived for many centuries on the west coast of India

With the rise of Islam, Palestine came under the Muslim Arabs and the inhabitants embraced Islam. By the 7th century A.D., the whole of Palestine became a Muslim land¹⁰. The Arab conquest still expanded eastward and by 712 AD, they reached Sind. They captured both sea

and land routes and Mediterranean sea virtually became an Arab lake. They carried on trade with India for some eight hundred years until the Europeans ousted them¹¹. In the north India, the Arabs came as conquerors, but in the south India they came as travelers and merchants. This made their relations with there Indian rulers peaceful and cordial¹². Though the Palestine did not occupy the hub of civilization in the Arab world, its importance could not be ruled out. The growth of the European maritime presence after 16th century adversely affected these contacts. The British East India Company came to India as merchants in the 17th century and became the ruler of the country. During this time, Palestine was under the Ottoman rule.

Indian National Congress and Zionist Congress:

During the colonial period, especially in the later part of the 19th century, few educated Indian from Bombay and Calcutta met in London while preparing for their Indian civil services examination or law. Later in India, these people formed Indian National Congress in 1885. Almost at the same period, elsewhere in Basle; the Zionist Congress was founded under the leadership of Theodore Herzl in 1897, which aimed for the creation of a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine¹³. These two organizations were totally opposed to each other in their aims and objectives. Since the Indian National Congress was anti-colonial and directed against the Western colonial powers, the

Zionist Congress was colonial in nature and sought the protection of the European colonial powers. The former organization fought for independence against the colonial rule while the latter constantly remained a movement of cooperation with the same powers for the creation of a state for Jews in Asia¹⁴.

Zionists intensified their brutal and harsh activities against the Palestinians under the protection of Western powers. To India's Nationalist leaders the Arab struggle for the preservation of their legitimate rights and retention of their land was a matter of basic importance.

The aim behind the Indian National Movement was to expel alien rulers from their land while the Zionists were attempting to gain a foothold in another country from which the local inhabitants by force or persuasion would have to be evicted. In this aim, Zionists succeeded and Palestine, which under the Ottoman and British Authority was an Arab Majority area, was now being converted in to a Jewish majority and an Arab minority under the authority of a Zionist state. The Zionists who captured Palestine were in collusion with Western colonialist movement¹⁵.

Indian National Congress and the Palestine Question:

The Congress looked at the whole issue as a struggle between nationalist Arabs and Zionist colonization where the Zionist had the

support of the British imperial power. The fact placed them on the side of the Arabs. This was in consonance with their views way back in 1922, when the Congress supported the Turks because of its policy against the imperial forces¹⁶. The Congress though expressed its sympathy to the Jews, deplored the way the Zionists were joining hands with the imperial powers. Therefore, in 1936, the Congress working committee sent its greeting to the Palestinian Arabs and observed September 27, 1936 as a Palestine day in order to show their solidarity with the Arabs of Palestine¹⁷. In a meeting, which was held in Allahabad in support of the Arabs, Nehru appreciated the brave Arab people for putting up a valiant fight in the cause of National Independence. Expressing his sympathy with the Arabs he declared¹⁸.

Our sympathies and good wishes must go out to the people of Palestine in this hour of their distress. The crushing of their movement is a blow to our nationalist struggle as well as to theirs. We hang together in this world struggle for freedom.

Jawaharlal Nehru in his presidential address at the Faizpur Congress expressed:¹⁹

The Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine is as much part of this great World conflict as India's struggle for freedom.

There were many other organizations, which expressed sympathy towards the Arabs in Palestine. The Sind Congress Socialist Conference held at Karachi on July 18, 1936 sent its greetings to the Arabs in Palestine and hoped that they would keep up the fight till independent Palestine was achieved. Bihar Muslim Independent Party Conference held at Patna on September 12, 1936 criticized the British government's policy about Palestine. In a conference held by Muslims of U.P. on July 18, 1936 Nehru who also attended the conference in his message expressed his sympathy and solidarity with the Arabs²⁰. Not only this, as early as November 1923, the Palestine Arab delegations were allowed to visit and collect funds in India for the restoration of the Al-Aqsa mosque²¹. In the 1930s, the Congress expressed its sympathy and support for the Palestinians in their struggle for independence against the British and applauded the bravery shown by the Arabs in their fight against the British. The committee also noted the Arabs and Jews should not fight each other but join their hands to have direct cooperation in establishing a democratic state in Palestine²².

Congress in her resolution expressed:²³

While sympathizing with the plight of the Jews in Europe and else where, the committee deplores that in Palestine the Jews have relied on British armed forces to advent their

claims and thus aligned themselves on the side of British imperialism. The committee trusts that Arabs and Jews will endeavor to find a basis for direct cooperation with a view to establish a free democratic state in Palestine with adequate protection of Jewish right.

The Indian National Congress sympathized with the Arabs and hailed them as nationalists. But it was not outrightly anti-Jews but anti-Zionist. Nehru who exerted enormous influence over the Indian National Congress met Jewish leaders in the late of 1930's regarding the persecution, which they faced in Germany. Not only had moved resolution in the All India Congress Committee, urging the British to facilitate Jewish immigration into India, he even arranged for setting of some Jewish refugees from Germany²⁴. His (Nehru's) approach to the whole problems was neither racial nor religious. This he clearly stated to the Indian Jews. He believed that the Arabs and Jews could live together and cooperate with each other for their mutual advantage²⁵.

India and its nationalist leaders resolutely opposed the Zionist philosophy as a matter of principle. Their antipathy towards Zionism was reflected in the official statements of the Indian National Congress and after independence in the attitude of the government of India. There were some who believed that Indian National Congress's reaction against Zionism was due to the pressures from the Muslim

leaders like Abul Kalam Azad. It would be a gross mistake to presume that this policy of Indian National Congress was formulated to ingratiate the Indian Muslims or to appease the Arabs. The Indian National Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and his disciple Jawaharlal Nehru cherished certain principles, which were close to the heart of every conscious Indian. One of them was separation of the religion from nationalism. The foundations of a secular India are laid on this principle.

Again, in 1938 at the historic Tripura session, the British conspiracy to carry out partition in order to appease the wealthy British and American Zionists was condemned by a number of nationalist spokesmen. The Congress resolution deplored the British decision to carry out the partition scheme “in the teeth of the Arab opposition” and asked the local Jews who were being brought by the World Zionist Organization to settle in Palestine “not to seek the shelter of the British mandatory power and not to allow themselves to be exploited in the interest of British imperialism²⁶”.

In her resolutions, the Congress stated:²⁷

The committee record their emphatic protest against the reign of terror that has been established in Palestine by British imperialism with a view to coerce the Arabs into accepting the proposed partition of

Palestine and assure them of the solidarity of the Indian people with them in their struggle for National freedom.

In another resolution

the working committee wishes to express their condemnation of the ruthless policy now being pursued by British imperialism in Palestine, which must lead to grave consequences, and reiterate their opinion that the issue of the future government of Palestine should be left to be decided on the principles of self-determination.

The attitude of the Indian national Congress towards Palestine question as a whole was influenced by its leaderships. The Organization's stand on the issue was almost symmetrical to Gandhi's and Nehru's views. This is not without reason, since Congress's uncompromising stand against colonialism. The Palestinian Arabs were placed under the colonial rule after the world war Ist. They were struggling against the colonial power. This made the Palestinian Arabs associate with the Congress and with other national movements in the world. The Congress, thus, was brought closer to the Palestinians and the former believed that by associating with the latter, they would be able to kill two birds with one stone-the Muslim separatism and the British. This could also be used as a lever to strengthen the Hindu-

Muslim unity, which could rock the very foundation of the British rule in India²⁸.

The secularist approach of the Congress to politics be one of the major reasons for its opposition to Zionism. The Congress vehemently advocated secular politics. This made it see Zionism as a movement based on religion. It failed to consider it as national liberation ideology. Moreover, Zionism was seen as a tool to be used by colonial and imperial powers, which the Congress could not tolerate. For the Congress, colonialism and imperialism were anathema. Congress attitude towards Zionism was also influenced due to other reasons. To Indians, Zionism appeared to be a European movement and then suspected that, tenets of imperialism might be attached to it and that it might pose a serious threat to the ongoing liberation movement in India²⁹.

Though the Congress was not very much attracted by Zionism, its policies were not taking an absolutely one-sided stand. It tried its best to strike a balance between the two movements. It made its stand clear that it was not anti Jews. While condemning the imperial policy of the colonial power, it urged the Arabs and Jews to look for amicable solutions. The Congress did not forget to underline the point that the problem could be solved between the two people with cooperation. It appealed to the Jews not to seek the shelter of the British power and

not to allow themselves to be exploited by their design³⁰. By collaborating with the imperial power-the Zionists lost the sympathies of the Afro-Asian nations in general and India in particular and did more harm in their attempts to seek a place in the Asiatic nations.

Gandhi and the Palestine Question:

Indian Perceptions of Zionism, which was trying to create a Zionist entity in Palestine during India's independence movement greatly, shaped India's policy after independence. The most respected Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who led the Indian masses against the colonial power since the beginning of the 20th century until the attainment of independence, had a close contact with the Jews when he was in South Africa. During his 21 years(1898-1914) stay in South Africa, Gandhi came very close to two prominent Jews—Henry S.L.Polak, a journalist and Hermann Kallenbach—a wealthy man. These two men however did not succeed and Gandhi remained anti-Zionist throughout his life³¹. Many a times Gandhi was asked by the Zionists his views on the Arab- Jewish question, and to favour the Jews. But he was firm on his idea. He said:³²

My sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became life long companions. Through these friends I came to learn much of their age long persecutions....But my

sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home of the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and in the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after their return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood? Palestine belongs to Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. Surely it would be a crime against the humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home.

He further expressed his views on the concept of the Promised Land, which is in the Bible:³³

The Palestine of the biblical concept is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their home land, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of British gun-----.They can settle in Palestine only by the good will of the Arabs.

Mahatma Gandhi's rejection of Zionist philosophy was categorical. Since he refused to be pressurized into accepting it as a basis of a nation state. When his old associate from South Africa, Hermann Kallenbach who was a dedicated Zionist approached him in 1937 to entice him in approving the Zionist Doctrine, Gandhi refused to accept Kallenbach's arguments. Gandhi stood firmly on his earlier stand despite unceasing efforts by the apologists of Zionism including the British Member of Parliament Sidney Silverman and American author and his friend, Louis Fisher. But Gandhi's replies to them were similar to what he had told to Kallenbach described on the earlier pages. His views were in the Harijan of November, 1938³⁴.

On the eve of the Palestine tragedy, he was more convinced of the grievous wrong done to the Arabs and wrote in August 1947 in Harijan expressing his moral support to the helpless Palestinians who were being uprooted from their homes and fields. "The Jews", he wrote³⁵, "have erred grievously in seeking to impose themselves on Palestine with the aid of America and Britain and now with the aid of naked terrorism. Why should they depend on American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcomed land?" Gandhi was hurt when he was told that the Zionist lobby has given a new twist to his convictions against the Zionist antics. The International Zionist

magnates especially in Britain and the United States came out with a startling clarification of his pronouncements.

They often repeated the argument that Gandhi was opposing the Zionist moves because he wanted to please the Indian Muslims some of whom are his close associates. Gandhi after knowing such perceptions of the Zionists came out with a stronger statement. "I have said often", he wrote, and "that I would not sell truth for the sake of India's deliverance. Much less would I do so for wining Muslim friendship"³⁶.

The inherent danger in the Zionist Movement, for which Gandhi rejected the Zionist doctrine, is that the foundations of the Zionist enclave were laid on the assumption that the Jews the world over constitute a 'nation' and that by virtue of their religion alone they are the prospective citizens of Israel. Like Indians the Arabs are also the victims of an unpardonable conspiracy of division of their land on the basis of race and religion.

Gandhi was not alone in his condemnation of Zionism. The Indian National Congress held similar views and expressed them publicly whenever the issue came up. One of the main reasons of mutual understanding between the Indian leaders and the Arab Nationalists was their common aversion to the idea of religion being used as a means to achieve political ends. The Egyptian nationalist leader Saad Zaghlul and Gandhi had intellectually come very close to

each other because of their secular approach to national politics. It was because of this secular out-look, that Indian National leaders never reconciled to the transplantation of a Zionist State in Palestine. The Indian National Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru condemned year after year in its annual sessions the sinister British moves of partitioning Palestine and handing over chunks of Arab territory to the Zionists. As early as 1937, the Indian national Congress expressed its strong disapproval of the partition of Palestine and the imperialist and Zionists machinations to strike terror in the Arab population. It condemned the “reign of terror unleashed with the view to coerce the Arabs in accepting the proposed partition”³⁷.

Jawaharlal Nehru and the Palestine Question:

Jawaharlal Nehru had a similar view as Gandhi on Palestine question. His knowledge of the Jewish history and their persecution did not have much influence on his Judgment of the issue. Indian great nationalist leader Gandhi categorically rejected the idea of a Jewish national home³⁸. Like him, Nehru too was against the demand for a Jewish national home. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote and spoke strongly about the deteriorating situation in Palestine. He firmly held that the Palestinian Arabs were struggling against a colonial power and its machinations.

To the Jewish victims of fascist terror and brutality”, he wrote³⁹, “we must extend all sympathy and help, but that does not and can not mean that Arab interests in their country of Palestine can be ignored. Palestine is an Arab country and Arab interests must prevail there.

The notorious Balfour Declaration made public in 1917 embodied the Zionist principles of a national home on the territory of Palestine to the Jewry. Lord Balfour, the then British foreign secretary issued letter on November 2, 1917 addressed to Lord Rothschild, leader of the Zionist Movement, in which he mentioned:

“I have much pleasure in conveying to you”, Balfour wrote, “on behalf of His Majesty’s government, the following declaration of sympathy with the Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and, approved by the Cabinet:⁴⁰

His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The declaration was received with indignation in Palestine and by the Arabs. Politically conscious people elsewhere protested against the British machinations of handing over a territory to a people who did not own it.

It should be noted that the Balfour declaration was issued on the eve of the British conquest of Palestine but finally it came into being with the help of Britishers in May 1948 when Israel declared herself as a sovereign state.

In 1923, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then president of the Indian National Congress asked India to make common cause with the struggle of Arabs when the Zionist Congress demanded the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Commenting on the Balfour declaration, Nehru, in a letter to his daughter, Indra Gandhi, in May 1933, wrote:⁴¹

But there was one drawback, one not unimportant fact seems to have been overlooked Palestine was not a wilderness, empty--- it was already some body else's home. So that this generous gesture of the British government was really at the expense of the people who already lived in Palestine.

Nehru was also disturbed by the reports that responsible Zionist leaders had suggested that a strong Jewish national home would help Great Britain in guarding the road to India⁴².

Pandit Nehru clearly understood British imperialist policies and felt that England was pitting the Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism to make it appear that her presence is necessary to act as an arbitrator and to keep the peace between the two. One has to be conscious of the fact that Arab nationalism was secular in its character.

His stand was clear on the Palestine issue. In December 1920, he wrote in "independent", daily English published from Allahabad about then prevailing situation in Palestine and the consequences of the Balfour declaration:⁴³

The Zionist immigration and the English occupation had two dangers; the country could hardly maintain the people already inhabiting Palestine. The coming in of new--- people from all the ghettos of Europe would mean either the driving out of the old population or their reduction to economic serfdom. The second danger was political Arabs in Palestine have to be left alone and strongly resent foreign domination.

Nehru and Congress were entirely on the Arab side in their struggle against British rule as well as against the aims of the Zionist.

Despite its sympathies for the Jews regarding their persecution in Europe, Indian national Congress considered Palestine an Arab country and deplored the effort to establish themselves there under the cover of British armed might.

Nehru remarked that the happenings in Palestine since the Balfour declaration of 1917 represented a gross betrayal of the Arabs by British imperialism. He argued that the Jews had a right to look to Jerusalem as their holy land and to have free access to it, but pointed out that the Balfour declaration went much beyond that and envisaged the creation of a Jewish State within an Arab community. He also pointed out that certain number of Jews could go and to settle in Palestine in an atmosphere of peace and good will, but when they went with the object of dominating the country, they could hardly expect to be welcomed by the Arabs. He considered the problem of Palestine as a nationalist one. It was a pity; therefore, that the Jews of Palestine instead of aligning themselves with that struggle had thought it fit to take the side of British imperialism and to seek its protection against the inhabitants of the country⁴⁴.

The immigration of the Jews in Palestine in large number means driving out the native population. People living in Palestine professing different faith wanted to be left alone. They opposed the foreign domination. At Brussels Congress of Oppressed nationalities, Nehru

met Palestine leaders-Abdel-kader el -Husseini and Djomal Effendi, which gave him an insight into the Palestine affairs. This resulted in the formation of the League Against Imperialism, [LAI]. Its impact in India can be seen in 1928 when the INC for the first time passed a resolution in favor of Palestine Arabs⁴⁵.

The Congress policy on Palestine issue was consistent even after the Second World War. Earlier contacts between National Movement leaders from India and the Palestine led to the closer ties. After the war , when leaders of the world met at San Francisco in 1945 at the United nations conference on international organizations, Asian leaders conceived of the idea of convening a conference in Asia. The Asian leaders did not have much faith in the San Francisco conference. Since, they were still haunted by the collapse of the League of Nations.

The idea of Asian conference began to grow since 1946, and Nehru put his weight behind it. In 1946, the Indian council of world affairs took the responsibility of planning the conference. On the one side, there was a sea change in the British government's attitude towards Indian national movement. The labour government announced in February 1947 the British decision to quit India not latter than June 1947. In the midst of these political changes, the first Asian conference was opened on 22 March 1947⁴⁶.

Various leaders and scholars attended the conference. Nehru had already prepared the groundwork along with the Indian council of world affairs. Invitations were sent to 32 countries including the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. However, six Arab countries- Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Iraq did not accept “individual invitations”. They had their own resentments over the invitation by saying that it was received too late. This excuse seems to be not convincing. The other more valid reason might be the inclusion of Zionists in the list. The Zionists responded to the invitation and came to the conference. The absence of the majority of the Arab state’s delegation left the Zionists with an open field to argue their cause freely and effectively⁴⁷. At the conference, the settlement (yishu) was represented by the Zionist delegations, which included intellectuals like Dr. Hugo Bergmann and Alfred Bonne⁴⁸.

In the inaugural speech of the conference Nehru, underlined the importance of the peace, which was also the responsibility of Asiatic nations. This peace according to him could come only “when nations are free and also when human beings everywhere have freedom and security and opportunity”. He touched upon nationalism in each country in Asia and freedom movement in the continent. Freedom which he envisaged was not confined to a particular people but should spread “over the whole human race”⁴⁹.

On the second day of the conference, the issue of the Palestine came up. This had been a hot issue since the Balfour Declaration and the Arabs had antagonistic views over the issue. Dr. Bergmann argued for the Jews in Palestine in its historical perspective. He said that the Jews were “old Asian people” and now at last, after many years of wondering, returning and settling down in their “old-new home land.” According to him, Jews could learn the idea of tolerance and cooperation among different religious groups and races, which Europe could not give. Dr. Bergmann even went further by saying that Jews would not try to solve the problem by dispossessing the Palestinians, though it was exactly done by them in the following years. He envisaged to return the desert green, revive Hebrew language and literature and expressed his hope that the conference would be the beginning of a new chapter⁵⁰.

The Egyptian representative challenged the argument put forth by Dr. Bergmann. She did not want the “British rule to be replaced by that of European Zionists.” She also welcomed Jews as settlers and stressed that the Arabs must live in Palestine. Since it belongs to them. Bergmann asked for the floor to refute the above statement, but was denied by Nehru who was presiding and, after a brief angry exchange, the Zionist delegation walked out. They were persuaded and requested by some Indian delegates to return. Nehru, in the speech referred to the

Palestine issue, while expressing his sympathy for the Jews because of their sufferings he clearly stated that:⁵¹

Palestine is essentially an Arab country and no decision can be made without the consent of the Arabs” and the issue would be settled between the two communities in cooperation “and not by any appeal to or reliance upon any outsiders

The Asian relations conference was an important opportunity for the Zionists to express their views on Palestine issue and to advocate their purpose. As stated earlier, the absence of some of Arab states made their task easier. Through this conference, they sought to get a place among the Asiatic nations. They presented their case in such a way that it would be palatable for the Asian people. The Jewish delegation tried hard to convince other delegations by expressing their desire to learn from Asia, which Europe could not give them. But all was not well with them. The storm came from an Egyptian delegate in India remained firm on her stand on Palestine. The Jewish delegation could not get what they desired from the conference and failed in their attempt to draw India closer to their cause. Indian leadership was prudent enough not to pass their judgment through emotional influences. Therefore, the Zionist leadership had to accept that the host could not be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, it was not a complete failure. It was a mixture of failure and success. The Zionist side was presented and Palestine issues were discussed at length. They made appeal to certain sections of the Asian people that “the holy land is inseparable from the people of Israel”⁵². Nevertheless, this had no impact on Indian leadership, which was steadfast in its commitment to Palestine cause.

United Nations and the Palestine Question:

The situation in Palestine was deteriorating since the beginning of the World War II. The movement launched by the Zionists to realize their national homeland was going in strength. This strength was vehemently opposed by the Arabs Higher Committee, which stood for the creation of Palestine state made up of Arabs and Jews, which went against the Biltmore programme of 1942: Palestine was to be a Jewish state⁵³.

The Biltmore program became the official policy of the World Zionist movement. The Mandatory authority in an attempt to solve the problem convened conference at London, which did not bear much fruits. Various suggestions and schemes were placed at the conference. All the attempts made by the British to solve the problems proved futile and on February 14, 1947, the British, frustrated in their attempt, “threw up their hands and handed the problem over to the United Nations.” The British government in February 1947 resolved to refer

the Palestine question to the United Nations. Within Palestine, the Zionist terror groups were engaged in spreading violence followed by a sharp increase in illegal immigration. Consequently, on April 2, 1947 Britain urged for holding a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of appointing a special committee⁵⁴ “to make recommendations---concerning the future government of Palestine”.

The United Nations in May 1947 appointed a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, UNSCOP, in response to the British government’s proposal to investigate the issue and bring its recommendations before the world organization. The UNSCOP submitted its recommendations by the time; India had already gained its independence. India was also the member of the 11-member UNSCOP, which produced two reports—one majority and the other was the minority report. The United Nations approved the majority report, which recommended the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, on 29 November 1947. While the minority report which recommended an independent Palestine as a federal state with Jerusalem as its capital was rejected by the General Assembly of the United Nations⁵⁵.

India’s Stand at United Nations:

The minority report was presented by Yugoslavia, Iran and India. India did not want that outsiders should take part in solving a

problem of a nation. Nehru argued that “Palestine is essentially an Arab country and no decision can be made without the consent of the Arabs”⁵⁶.

Sir Abdur Rahman, the representative of India and the member of UNSCOP in a special note observed:⁵⁷

If the right of self-determination of peoples as envisaged by President Wilson, (and on which the first four paragraphs of Article 22 of the convenient of the League of Nations were based) is to be the determining factor and if imperialistic designs are to be countenanced no longer, there is no escape from the conclusion that independence should be granted to Palestine forthwith, subject to such intern arrangements for the transfer of power as may seem to be desirable. The people of Palestine have now admittedly reached a stage where their recognition as an independent nation can no longer be delayed. They are in no way less advanced than the people of the other free and independent Asiatic countries.

India disagreed with the partition plan and along with Iran and Yugoslavia; it offered the minority plan of creation of Palestine as a federal state. Nehru on December 4, 1947 explained India’s position in the constituent Assembly in reply to a cut motion:⁵⁸

We took up a certain attitude in regard to it (Palestine), which was roughly a federal state with autonomous parts of it. It was opposed to both the other attitudes, which were before the United Nations. One was partition which has now been adopted, the other was a unitary state; we suggested a federal state with naturally an Arab majority in charge of federal state but with autonomy for the other regions—the Jewish regions. After a great deal of thought, we decided that this was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem, but the only real solution of the problem. Any other solution would have meant fighting and conflict.

The Arab League and the Arab Higher Committee rejected the UNSCOP report, which was published on September 08, 1947, but the Jewish agency accepted the report in principle with certain reservations. In spite of Arab rejection, the United Nations went ahead and adopted the partition plans on November 29, 1947 by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions⁵⁹.

The UN partition resolution was followed by unrest and chaos. By the end of November, both Zionists and Arabs were preparing to take over the control of Palestine after the British withdrawal. There were sporadic clashes, and casualties were high on both sides. The thirteen member legislative committee of the Yishu-the people's

administration, after a long debate on boundary issue read out the text in Tel Aviv on Friday, May 14, 1948⁶⁰ declaring the birth of the state of ISRAEL.⁶¹

We, the members of the national council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly by virtue of the national and historic right of the Jewish people and the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, to be called Israel.

Both the great Indian leaders Nehru and Gandhi rejected the Zionist claim to Palestine when the Israeli state became a reality; Nehru viewed Israel as an imperialist creation and another sectarian state like Pakistan. The BJP and its predecessors in the Hindu nationalist movement saw Israel in a different light, as a fellow struggler against Muslim militancy⁶²

The Arabs and Zionists were already prepared for war prior to the withdrawal of the mandatory authority. The Arab Liberation Army from Syria had already infiltrated into Palestine to work with Palestinian Arabs. Jews were also operating under their terrorist organizations-The Haganah, the Irgun Zvi leumi and the Stern Gang. They mercilessly unleashed their terror tactics, many villages were

looted, inhabitants killed, and thousands fled. But the unconcerted and half hearted efforts from the Arabs was not much against the well-trained terrorist occupiers of Israel and the war ended in favour of the Zionists state. She gained more territory of the Arab land, which was not officially allotted to them. Thus, the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49 ended. Four Armistice agreements were signed by Israel with Egypt on February 24, 1949, with Lebanon on March 23, 1949, with Jordan on April 3, 1949 and with Syria on July 20, 1949⁶³.

India followed a consistent policy. Her sympathy towards the Palestinian people persisted. The creation of the state of Israel, which brought the Jews and Arabs in a hot war, made many Palestinians refugees. Thousands of them fled Palestine, taking shelter else, where, becoming refugees and those in Palestine too had no better position. They become refugees in their own land. India wanted the problem to be solved amicably. She supported the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, which worked for Palestinian refugees. She argued that this problem was due to the creation of the Jewish state, so it was the duty of Israel to create a climate of confidence in which refugees could return home safely with dignity and honour and thereby could fully exercise the right to self-determination⁶⁴.

India's recognition to Israel:

The Zionist state almost after a year of independence applied for membership in the United Nations. The United Nations Security Council accepted Israeli's application for admission to the United Nations on March 04, 1949. A week later the General Assembly passed a resolution, thereby granting membership to Israel⁶⁵. The Indian delegates voted against the admission of Israel into the United Nations, stating that India could not recognize a state, which was created by force not by negotiations.

Though India maintained a consistent policy towards the then crisis in West Asia, there were certain groups of people who did not see to eye with the government. The Hindu Mahasabha represented it. In its working committee resolution, the aspirations of this group could be thus seen:⁶⁶

The discriminatory policy of the Nehru government in refusing recognition of the new state of Israel, the people of which, after years of courageous and tenacious struggle against powerful international forces, has recovered their freedom and have established a progressive state on modern democratic lines. While Israel had been admitted as a member of the United Nations Organization--the with holding of recognition by the

government of India has been creating misunderstanding and hampering the growth of mutual goodwill and friendship which is so vital for stabilizing India's position in the Middle East---steps be immediately taken for recognition of Israel and building up intimate relationship with the people of the state.

Since the UNSCOP could not impose the partition until all the sides accepted the plan—either politically or militarily, it advised that the Mandate should end by 1st of August 1948. However, the British terminated their Mandate on the night of 14-15 of May 1948. The Zionists declared the creation of a new independent state of Israel on 14 May 1948 ⁶⁷.

After claiming the independence, Israel made repeated appeals to the United Nations for granting its membership to Israel. On 4 of May, 1949 the United Nations Security Council accepted Israel's application for the membership to the United Nations ⁶⁸. A week later, the General Assembly passed a resolution, granting Israel membership ⁶⁹.

The then Prime Minister of India ordered the delegation to vote against a resolution, since "India could not recognize an Israel which had been achieved through the force of arms and not through negotiations"⁷⁰.

The negative voting of India against Israel's admission to the United Nations at best be interpreted as a continuation of India's policy on the issue that it did not support the occupation of Palestine by the Zionists. As stated earlier India's leaning towards the Palestinian cause was a matter of principle, which she was fighting for. It was not absolutely due to her uncompromising attitude towards Zionism, but India was more motivated by her desire to demonstrate publicity to the Arabs that she standing by their cause, which was just and humane.

Nehru continued to resist the recognition of Israel but on 17 September 1950, India formally recognized the state of Israel as a legal entity in the international community⁷¹. The question of recognition came up as early as part the second half of 1948. The provisional government of Israel approached the government of India for recognition and its foreign minister Mr. M. Moshe Shertok sent telegram to India concerning the matter ⁷². The prime minister openly announced that he wanted to defer the matter because the new state, which was recently formed, had to be seen and watched. He added, "Normally we should have to be satisfied and know exactly what the international position is before taking any step"⁷³.

On 06 December 1949, Nehru made, in the constituent assembly, an announcement. He said:⁷⁴

Israel is now a member of the United Nations and its recognition by other member states cannot be indefinitely deferred. The government of India would like to act in this matter, which has been the subject of this, controversy among nations with whom we have friendly relations, that would avoid misunderstanding or ill-feeling and a hope that satisfactory decision will be possible in the near future.

A year after recognition Israel was permitted to open a consulate in Bombay but attempts to move this office to New Delhi and to raise the same to a consulate general have failed because of Indian government opposition.

India's refusal to move any nearer to the Jewish state has often been criticized by Israelis and by pro-Zionist Americans. It has been denounced as an act of cowardice, of hypocrisy and of cynicism, as a betrayal of non-alignment and of India's proffered claim to consider issues on their merits. But in adopting an aloof attitude to Israel, that is precisely what India did at that time: she had considered the issue on its merits and had concluded that in principle⁷⁵.

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Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey **Abstained:1**, Siam

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Chapter-2

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

India and Arab-Israeli wars (1948-1982):

India had vehemently opposed the partition of Palestine however, accorded the recognition to the state of Israel in September 1950. But with the recognition of Israel, India did not exchange the diplomatic representatives between the two states. Though, Israel was later on permitted to open a consulate in Bombay (now Mumbai). Nehru the then prime minister of India explained his decision of extending recognition to Israel:¹

It's not a matter of high principle but is based on how it could best serve and be helpful in that area. We should like the problem between Israel and the Arab countries to be settled peacefully. After careful thought, we felt that recognizing Israel as an entity will need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel---and we think it is correct decision.

Moreover, India by giving recognition to Israel showed its respect to the decision making body of United Nations.

India was looking at the conflict between Arabs and Israelis from ideological and principled perspective. So it was quite obvious that India could not go along with Israelies². Before the termination of British Mandate over Palestine, Zionist forces moved to occupy the cities and areas in territories allotted for the Palestinian state. By 14

May 1948 over half of the Palestinian population was forced into exodus, as over two-thirds of the Palestinian land became occupied by the Zionists. Ben Gurion admitted before the Mandate ended that “.... *No Jewish settlement however remote, was entered or seized by the Arabs, while the Haganah....captured many Arab positions. So, on the day of destiny that part of Palestine where the Haganah could operate was almost clear of Arabs.*”

On the eve of 15 May 1948, while Britain had completed the withdrawal of administration and army, David Ben Gurion proclaimed the creation of Israel. At this point the Arab League sent a telegram to the UN. The telegram stated that in consequence of Zionist aggression, the Arab States “ *were compelled to intervene for the sole purpose of restoring peace and security and of establishing law and order in Palestine*”. to prevent as well “ *the spread of disorder and lawlessness into the neighbouring Arab lands, and to fill the vacuum created by termination of the Mandate*”³.

However, the intentions of Ben Gurion and his terrorist companions were quite different under the garb of filling up the vacuum on account of British withdrawal, they unleashed unprecedented act of terror. The annals of Zionist history are full of leaders outdoing other leaders in insisting on the importance of military power and the role of force and terror in the building and

safeguarding of the Zionist state: Joseph Trumpeldor, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Ben Gurion, and all the Israeli generals. They asserted that the violence and terror are the backbone of the plan to enforce the Zionist programme. This was necessarily so because the Zionists have... simply invaded a country, evicted the majority of the population, followed this up with further use of force and terrorism⁴.

*“I would suggest to you to come round in time to the” Greater Palestine” programmed before it is too late...The Basle programme must contain the words” Greater Palestine” or Palestine and its neighbouring lands...otherwise it is nonsense. You do not get the ten million Jews into a land of 25,000 square kilometers”*⁵ were the words which David Trietch sent to Theodore Herzl on 29 October 1899, expresses with perfect clarity the inner logic of Zionist policies:⁶

Deir Yassin” massacre has clearly exposed the Zionist policies and also put before the World a shocking example of what the Begin’s movement stood for. Deir Yassin an Arab village on the main road to Jerusalem and surrounded by Jewish lands had taken no part in the war...On April 9 terrorist bands (Irgun, Lehi, Hagana) attacked this peaceful village...and killed most of its inhabitants. “It is imperative that the truth

about Mr. Begin and his movement be made known in this country....The undersigned therefore take this means of publicly presenting a few salient facts concerning Begin, and of urging all concerned not to support this latest manifestation of Fascism.

Begin, Shamir and Sharon were nothing but a triumvirate of war criminals. Even Ben Gurion described Begin, as ‘a thoroughly Hitlerite type’⁷.

On May 1948 the Israeli state was duly proclaimed and Begin came out of the underground to make his first radio speech he said⁸

The Hebrew revolt of 1947-48 has been blessed with success...O God of Israel, keep thy soldiers and bless their sword, which gives a new birth to the covenant that thou had sealed with thy beloved people and thy chosen land forward to the ground! Forward to victory! The terrorists had triumphed.

In what the Zionists claim to be a “war of Independence” five Arab armies, i.e., Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq crossed the borders of Palestine on 15 May 1948. Though the Arab armies were less equipped, in the face of a decisive Israel military superiority and despite the fact that its unified command was held by British military personnel, whose final target was to secure the new-born Israeli state, the Arab armies made limited military successes: while the Egyptian

army had reached an advanced line near Tel Aviv, the Jordanian and Iraqi armies controlled wide areas including Lydda and Ramleh. As its military position was deteriorating, Israel turned to the UN for intervention, charging that the Arab had started the war. On 22 May 1948, the Security Council convened to discuss the situation and adopted, after, a resolution calling upon *“all governments and authorities, without prejudice to the rights, claim or positions of the parties concerned, to abstain from any hostile military action in Palestine, and to that end to issue a cease-fire order to their military and paramilitary forces”*. The tragedy became imminent when the UN through its Secretary General, Trygve Lie, upheld Israel's accusation against the Arabs for starting an aggression. Supported by the members of the Security Council, the Secretary General threatened the Arab States and warned of action, including sanctions.

This endorsement by the World body opened a history of injustices against the Palestinians as U.N. had remained silent in the face of Zionist aggression and occupation offering a deaf ear to their complaints ignoring its own resolutions and charter⁹.

The war which ended in the favour of Israel brought more Arab territories which were allotted to Palestinians by the UN, under the occupation of Israel. It resulted the forced migration of thousands of Palestinian Arabs to the other neighbouring Arab States. After this

war the Israel was again provided benefits by the UN when her application for the membership of the UN was approved in May 1949 by the UN. Israel's admission to the UN was granted almost after one year of its creation. India voted against Israel's admission stating that "India could not recognize Israel which has been achieved through the force of arms and not through negotiations"¹⁰.

India is linked with Arabs states by historical, political and economic cords. Arab solidarity with India in her campaign against imperialism and colonialism made India's foreign policy tinged with an Arab blend. In this kind of circumstances it was quite obvious that Arabs would like India to be along with them. Arab influence on India in later years loomed larger and made the latter appear to be more pro-Arab and anti-Zionist.

Taking recognition as a welcome gesture, the Israeli government made a move for establishing normal diplomatic relations. Dr. Walter Eytan director general of Israeli foreign ministry paid an official visit to India in March 1952. According to him, it seemed that the Indian prime minister had approved the idea of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. Yet formal decision had to be taken later, after the general election. The following year when Eytan met Nehru at Berne, the government of India had already jibbed what was accomplished was the permission of Indian government to

establish an Israeli consul general in Bombay, which is termed as 'India's diplomatic Siberia'¹¹.

Nehru was the main architect of India's foreign policy. He took a great caution in dealing with Israel and later refused to normalize relations with Israel¹². The Jana Sangh, Swatantra party and the Praja Socialist were against the government policy. The Jana Sangh argued that India should adopt more pragmatic foreign policy, because foreign policy, according to them, was a policy and not an immutable principle. They said that Israel was the only democratic country in West Asia and it was therefore imperative that India must have full diplomatic relations with Israel¹³.

The Jan Sangh thinking was oblivious of the fact that the so-called democratic state of Israel was established at the expense of the majority of Palestinians, an act quite contrary to the basic principles of democracy.

The main reason for the non-development of normal relations with Israel was due to the earlier principled stand so valiantly taken up by the Indian Leadership of the Indian Liberation Movement. The Congress party after independence dominated the Indian political system and its foreign policy. Its overwhelming majority in the parliament enabled it to overrule agendas set by Jan Sangh to benefit Israel at the expense of Palestinians. So, the non-establishment of

diplomatic relation with Israel could be ascribed to the continuation of the policy perused by the Congress in the preceeding years.

In the early years of independence, Indian economic position was not sound. India was launching her first plan and could not afford to loose her Arab friends, which were of vital importance for her basic economic needs. Pragmatically, trade relations between India and Arab states were more significant and bigger in volume than Israel. They still are. Moreover, remittances which India gets from Indian community working in these Arab countries are exceptionally high. On the other hand, Indo-Israeli trade was limited and had lesser scope for expansion. The commodity pattern also made Arab countries advantageous for India. India imported from Arab states items like oil, cotton, phosphate and so on, which have less substitutes, unlike Israeli diamond and citrus fruits and its products¹⁴. Moreover, since 1973, Indo-Arab trade relations became increasingly important. The question of India's relations with the region was and is closely linked with the oil economy. On the other side, India's consultancy, if applied sufficiently could help Gulf countries in technology ¹⁵. India's west Asian policy had to be directed to counter Pakistani propaganda. This is necessary because of two main reasons: - to win the Arabs to her side especially at United Nations and to look into the popular sentiments of the liberal minded overwhelming

population in India. India's non-establishment of normal relations with Israel also had something to do with Pakistani factor- to give no chance to Pakistan's propaganda against India among the Islamic nations¹⁶.

India's West Asian policy was greatly influenced by her relations with the Arabs and the Arab Nationalist Movements. The Egyptian revolution in 1952 created a new dimension in Indo-Arab relations, which had a chain reaction to her attitude towards Israel. After the revolution (1952) Nasser's Egypt assumed the leadership of the Arabs more than ever before. Egypt, which had taken an uncompromising attitude against any form of imperialism and colonialism, represented a form of non-alignment. The very structure of her policy, which is governed by revolutionary idea made her not to align themselves with any other bloc. This ideological commitment made Egypt support all countries committed to the same objectives¹⁷.

Egyptian government's opposition to imperialism, qualified by non-alignment, found a place with Indian foreign policy makers. India's and Egypt's consistent opposition to all forms of imperialism intrigues and maneuvers led to their attacks on the Baghdad pact. This common policy brought India and Egypt closer. This friendship was

further cemented during the Belgrade Summit of non-aligned countries¹⁸.

India's relation with Egypt had a major role in her policy towards Israel. Since India was standing very close to Egypt in her foreign policy, it would be almost impossible to move closer towards Israel, which was seen as the outpost of the west and a belligerent state by Egypt. So, India did not take step towards the normalization of her relations with Israel¹⁹. India was very much against the colonialism and imperialism. After adopting the socialist pattern of society it strengthened her friendship with the former Soviet Union. Nehru visited Moscow in 1955, which became able to get the Soviet Union's support in many ways²⁰. Since 1953, India had continuously rejected Israel's proposals for developing diplomatic ties. Regarding the clashes, which took place between Arabs and Israelis since the creation of Israel India came more open and vocal in expressing her condemnation of Israel. Her attitudes towards these conflicts (1948, 1956) have been influenced by her national interest. India condemned Israeli alliance with imperial powers because of the large scale aggression. One more thing which India found contradictory with Israel was the creation of Israel on religious basis, which was totally against the secular ideology of India²¹.

The year 1956 was a landmark in the history of West Asia. It marked the emergence of a new regional order. This was precipitated by the Suez crisis. On 26 July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company in response to the withdrawal of Aswan Dam loans by contributing powers, which was done in reaction to the Czech arms deal of May 1955 and thus disturbed the regional status quo²².

A conference was convened at London. Nehru assured Nasser that the purpose of India in attending the conference was not to weaken Egypt's position but to prevent any unilateral action to be taken in the conference. In the conference India ardently prevented the western move to aggrandize their economic interest and upheld Egyptian right to nationalize the canal²³. In spite of a number of diplomatic efforts to solve the problems, Israel, in collaboration with Britain and France, launched a sudden and pre-meditated attack on Egypt on October 29, 1956²⁴. India did not expect such a sudden attack and expressed her hope that the United Nations would be able to take steps to prevent extension of hostilities. Nehru publicly condemned Israeli action and branded it as a case of clear naked aggression²⁵. He even asked the former Yugoslavia and the Bandung countries to join him in public condemnation of the aggressor²⁶. India held that Israel had no right to invade the Suez. By invading Egypt and also by joining hands with imperial forces, Israel lost the

sympathy of Afro-Asian nations including India. On the question of Egypt's denial of passage through the Suez to Israel, India had the opinion that it would be quite natural and obvious that an Arab country, which was at war with Israel, would show lethargy to the latter's flag passing the canal. But this could be solved through peaceful means²⁷.

Nehru declared in the Lok Saba on 16th of November 1956 when he spoke at length regarding the attack on Egypt that the aggression had come as a shock; it was a scandalous "case of aggression by two strong powers against weaker country."²⁸

India played a very constructive role in the crisis through the Afro-Asian meeting and in United Nations India was a co-sponsor of the 19-nations Asian-African resolution on the question of the withdrawal of Israeli –Anglo-French forces from the Egyptian soil²⁹. Even opposition parties had joined the government in condemning the aggressor. It was seen as a new phase of colonialism and imperialism. Various political parties urged the government to cut all liaisons with Britain and denounced India's membership of the common wealth³⁰. India's approach to the Suez crisis was an outcome of her national interest and her desire to solve the problem in a peaceful manner. As India was one of the principal users of the canal, her economic activity was affected due to its closure. Egypt and India held the

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British responsible for the crisis³¹. Throughout the crisis India was busy coordinating the major event with other nonaligned nations. In the initial period India was mostly acting alone but once the tripartite attacks were launched on Egypt, India supported Egypt fully and unequivocally condemned the aggressors³².

India also showed strong reactions against Israel in June war of 1967. Indian government blamed Israel for escalating the situation into an armed conflict. Referring to the Indian soldiers in the United Nations emergency force who were killed by Israeli forces, Indira Gandhi condemned the killings as deliberate, unprovoked. The Indian government as always took a very pro-Arab stand and even went to the extent of sponsoring the UAR draft³³. The war also crystallized India's west Asian policy into supporting the Palestinians cause. She identified herself closer with the Palestinians and openly supported them in their struggle against the Israeli government³⁴.

India being a non-aligned country was reluctant towards the hostile policy of Israel and condemned the American policy towards the Arabs. Due to Israeli aggression of 1967 against the Arab, India decided to break off relations even at the consulate level with Israel as an immediate measure and she extended moral support to the deprived Arabs who were the victims of Israeli aggression³⁵.

The Indian government in conformity with its pro-Arab policy condemned the Israeli aggression. Looking at the crisis from global perspective, India's then prime minister, Mrs. Indra Gandhi observed in the lok sabha on 6 June 1967:³⁶

The world today witnesses a disastrous war in West Asia and the situation becomes grave by hour. If not stopped, this war is likely to expand into wider one drawing into its vortex other countries and developing perhaps in to a world war---. It is our solemn duty as a government to help in restoration of peace in the present perilous situation.

Expressing the same concern for West Asia, she said in the Rajya sabha on the next day, i.e., 7th of June, 1967 as

“The world is in grave peril. Our own national interests are bound up with peace and stability in West Asia”³⁷.

In the United Nations, India stressed the need for lasting peace and wanted Israel to withdraw its armed forces to the positions held before the commencement of the hostilities. Speaking at the emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly on 21st June, 1967 Mr. Chagla remarked, “The foundation of a lasting peace in the region can be based only on a total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal

of Israel from the areas now under its occupation...³⁸ He also argued that disputes can not be settled through the armed conflict³⁹.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, while addressing the General Assembly on 14th October 1967, also stressed the need for solving the problem by “political means” based on the principles of security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the states in the area⁴⁰.

In December 1967, Mr.D.P.Dhar, a member of the Indian delegation to the U.N.Special Committee reiterated the Indian position, which recognized the Palestinians as a people and not merely as refugees. It was also emphasized that the lasting solutions of many problems existing could be worked out only when the key issue of the refugee problem was dealt with and steps were taken to ensure the just rights of the Arab people of Palestine on the basis of paragraph II of resolution 194(III)⁴¹.

During the Arab Israeli conflicts through 1967-69 India took side with the Arabs and denounced Israel for attacks on Beirut international airport in December 1969. India was also unhappy with Israel over her occupation of Al-Aqsa mosque in eastern Jerusalem. At United Nations, India urged for the immediate implementation of the Security Council resolution on Jerusalem⁴².

India’s stand on June war was not shared by all political parties and public at large. India Israel relation, though had touched a very

low ebb, was viewed by them in the context of Arab's stands vis-à-vis Indian crisis in the preceding years. Opposition leaders from Jan Sangh, the Swatantra party, the Praja Socialist party and the Samyukta socialist party criticized the government's stand. They advocated that by supporting the Arab unreservedly India unnecessary would encourage the Arabs to adopt more hostile attitudes towards Israel, which would create more tension in the region⁴³. They also pointed out that India was going out of her way and should stop acting like the fourteenth Arab state. And some people did not endorse government policy of supporting the Arabs blindly⁴⁴. Opposition members (excluding the Communists) who did not share government's view on the issue were conditioned by Arab stand on India's crisis in 1961, 1962, and 1965. When the Indian army took over Goa in December 1961, Israeli press accused India maintaining a double standard⁴⁵. On the contrary, Egypt closed Suez Canal and did not allow Portuguese arms and ammunitions to flow towards India. A shining example of Indo-Arab fraternity, non-aligned principles and third world solidarity in contrast to Israel's leanings towards West.

This unfriendly tone of the Israeli press however changed in 1962, when China invaded India. India sought military assistance from all over the world. Israeli response was favorable⁴⁶. Israelis less

concerned with India's predicament have always tried to sell arms to friends and foes alike. Presently China is also on the buyers list.

The US support to India also helped in that context. So, after 1962 Chinese aggression, a powerful lobby was active in India, which canvassed, for various reasons, in favour of immediate establishment of diplomatic relation with Israel. It is also argued that India should adopt pro-American policy which would bring India and Israel together⁴⁷ and that it was imprudent on the part of India to thrust all her weight behind the Arab cause when she got only lukewarm attitudes from the Arabs in 1962 and 1965⁴⁸. Opposition members- Jan Sangh, the Swatantra Party, Praja Socialist, Samyukta Socialist Party, were astonished by India's indifference towards Israel. It was argued that while some countries like USA, UK, Yugoslavia, Kenya and so on maintained good relations with both Arabs and Israel, why could India also not do the same? It was said that leadership in India should not succumb to Arab pressure in a bid to appease them. They also argued that majority of the Arabs were with Pakistan and even UAR remained partially neutral. When UAR could remain friendly with Pakistan, India, China, why could India not be friendly with both Israel and UAR. Jan Sangh even asked whether India's policy was to be conducted in her interests or in Arab interests. They viewed Israel as a force in the region and as the symbol of stability⁴⁹. While they

think so they conveniently forget that Israel is the greatest destabilizing factor in the region.

In 1973, war broke out again in west Asia. During the war, India supported the Arabs as she felt that their action could not be termed as aggression as Israel had provoked the war by not adopting a more flexible attitude in negotiating a proper settlement. It declared that “the cause of tension in the area is Israeli aggression and the refusal to vacate the territories occupied by armed forces”. Declaring India’s sympathies with the Arabs, it further said that Arabs cause was based on justice and demanded immediate implementation by Israel of United Nations resolution 242(1967) for peaceful solution of the problem⁵⁰.

On 6th December, 1973 the then Indian foreign minister Sardar Swaran Singh stated that, “our sympathies for the Arabs are for two reasons. First, they are our centuries old friends and second, their territories have been occupied following the Israeli aggression....”⁵¹. Mrs. Indra Gandhi also gave two reasons for India’s sympathy towards the Arabs. First India’s old and solid relations with Arabs required India to “stand by its friends in the time of their travail” and the secondly Israel’s refusal to Arab lands occupied in 1967 war and its refusal to honour UN resolutions⁵².

India's policy towards the Arab Israel conflict was based on the principled opposition to acquisition of land by force and it wanted Israel to withdraw to pre-June 1967 frontiers so that progress would be made to resolve the crisis.

During the Israeli attack the Ministry of External affairs in its statement condemned Israel and held the view that the intransigence on the part of Israel was the basic cause leading to the outbreak of hostilities⁵³.

After 1973 Mr. Arafat was called by the UN General Assembly to address the World body on 13 November 1974. Arafat in his historic address stressed the PLO's willingness and priority for a peaceful solution to the issue. He further stated as, "Today I have come bearing on olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand"⁵⁴. Responding to Mr. Arafat's address the then Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Kewal Singh made a statement at the UN General Assembly on 19th November 1974, in which he endorsed the views expressed by Arafat at the UN. India introduced a draft resolution on 21st November 1974 in favour of Palestine cause. The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It also stood for the Palestinian national independence and sovereignty⁵⁵.

Israel after signing the Camp David accord and its subsequent peace treaty with Egypt turned towards Lebanon. In their bid to crush the PLO, Israeli moves were an attempt to bait the Palestinians into provoking a confrontation in southern Lebanon, the Israeli provocation may be an effort to justify an attack that Israel otherwise could not afford to make because of unprecedented international pressure⁵⁶. The atrocities committed by Israeli military during the Lebanese crisis were very horrific and condemnable.

South block expressed her shock over the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. She condemned Israel's infamous history of misdeeds⁵⁷ stressed the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians for establishing durable peace in the region. India also put efforts to solve the problems, though her efforts had Arab tinge⁵⁸. In India the Israeli consul, Yosef Hassen, commented on India's official stand on the crisis, which is highly objectionable. In a newspaper interview, he bluntly said that Indian politicians were afraid of the Arabs and thereby succumbed to their pressure. This was seen by the government of India as an unacceptable interference in the domestic affairs of India and in retaliation, the Israeli consul was asked to leave the country within forty-eight hours⁵⁹.

When the extent and gravity of political and diplomatic support of India to PLO was popularly recognized, by yet another significant

diplomatic move, on 10th January 1975, India accorded diplomatic recognition to PLO. India was the first non-Arab country to make such a move. Yassar Arafat endorsed the move and hoped that this would strengthen the struggle of Palestinian people “a very big push forward”⁶⁰. India kept on arguing for the welfare of Palestinian people and the legitimate demands of the PLO at the UN and related bodies. Referring to the exhortation of Arafat in the UN General Assembly, India’s representative Mr.R.Jaipal stated at the UN that the Palestinians had come to the UN for peace and the World body should take a decision that would give hope to the Palestinian Arabs. On 4th October 1975, he again made statements on the situation in the Middle East. He also referred to the plight of the stateless Palestinians being at disadvantage to pursue their interests in effective way and the need for the UN to come to their rescue⁶¹.

The period of 1980’s witnessed a new initiative and intensification of India’s move to strengthen the PLO diplomatically and politically. On 26th March 1980 the then Indian Foreign minister Mr.P.V.Narsimha Rao announced in the Parliament that India had decided to accord full diplomatic recognition to the office of PLO in New Delhi⁶². After this move Mr. Arafat paid a three day official visit to India between 28th and 30th March 1980 on the invitation of Mrs. Gandhi. During his visit Mrs. Gandhi stated that sympathy for the

Palestinians “has been a part of independent India’s foreign policy from its very inception”⁶³. Mrs. Gandhi also reiterated that a just peace and comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis could be found only with the “full participation of the PLO as an equal partner in any settlement”⁶⁴.

India’s Palestine policy was further strengthened when Arafat again paid second visit to India as Head of the state in exile in May 1982. During his visit he was described as “the symbol of a people afire with the spirit of freedom” by Mrs. Gandhi⁶⁵.

The Palestinian agenda surged up to the forefront once again. Tel Aviv too suffered more causality in the Lebanon in 1982 war. On account of the role of the Shinbet, the Israeli secret service evoked greater international sympathy for the Palestinians⁶⁶. The PLO had appealed that the United Nations peacekeeping force should replace the Israeli troops in the areas from where they were pulling out⁶⁷. Indian solidarity with the Arabs and Palestinians in particular could be seen by the very fact that India permitted the PLO to open an office in New Delhi on 10 January 1975⁶⁸. This shows that Palestine factor became the guiding principle towards the West Asian crisis. The Palestinians cause was upheld as a high principle of humanity and Israeli government was looked upon as aggressors with imperialistic design.

India's reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was sharp and harsh. The then Indian foreign minister, Mr. Rao referred the matter on 19th June 1982 as the "enactment of savage drama involving the butchery of our Palestinian brothers and sisters"⁶⁹. Mrs. Gandhi on 25th July, made a statement in the Lok Saba condemning the Israeli attack and maintained that "Israeli attempts to wipeout the Palestinian movement can not succeed in the long run"⁷⁰. In September 1982 Mrs. Gandhi further sent a message to Mr. Arafat in which she praised the PLO's spirited resistance to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon⁷¹.

Janta Government and Its Relations with Israel:

Indo-Israeli relations had shown a negative trend since the beginning of the fifties. The government policy even sank deeper in the 1960's. But during the latter part of 1960's, there came up a strong pro-Israeli lobby in India. The Chinese invasion of 1962 was seen by this group of people as an acid test of friendship. Israel's transfer of weapon like mortar to India during the crisis was seen as an act of friendship⁷² since then this lobby had been campaigning for Israel in India. But with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Indo-Israeli relations touched the lowest ebb. The government of India's sympathy for the Jewish people for their suffering in the past though had not withered away it was very wary of Zionists actions. The Indian

government along with many nations asked the Israeli government to leave the occupied territories, which were endorsed by the United Nations Security Council resolutions 243 and 338. So, India was standing by the Palestinians cause within and without the United Nations.

The parliamentary election of March 1977 brought to power the Janta Party headed by Morarji Desai, with the former Jan Sangh leader Atal Behari Vajpayee as the minister of external affairs⁷³. On west Asia, despite their canvassing for a change when they were in opposition, the Janta Party continued to back the Arabs and the Palestinians. India reaffirmed that for the establishment of the peace in the region, Israel should vacate those territories which they had been occupying since 1967 and allow the Palestinians the right to self-determination or even separate state of their own in which they could live in security and peace .The Indian government also reportedly deplored Israel's activity of aggression and of building Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories which aggravated tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians⁷⁴.

The Janta party stressed clearly that in the international field. it would pursue a genuinely non-aligned policy. It should not only remain nonaligned but must also appear to be so. The party would follow a policy, which would not show that India was titling towards

a particular bloc⁷⁵. So the non-alignment policy continued to form the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. In view of this, India had to follow the old policy which had been pursued since independence and there was no shift in it. During the Janta's rule it examined the foundation of India's foreign policy and considered nonalignment as one of the cardinal principles of foreign policy. Developing relations with Israel would sound to many Indians and Arabs as a turning away from the policy of nonalignment because of the simple reason that Israel was a very close ally of USA. Indo-Israeli ties remained on the shelf during the Janta period Moshe Dayan, the then foreign minister of Israel visited India but his trip did not produce the expected results⁷⁶.

When Moshe Dayan came to India there was no diplomatic relations between India and Israel even though an Israeli Consulate was established in Bombay. The main reason behind the visit was to muster diplomatic relations with India. During his visit Mr. Dayan met with the then Indian Prime minister and had some discussions with him. Indian premier, Mr. Morarji Desai put his views before Mr. Dayan:⁷⁷

You must make peace with the Arabs. The Israelis have suffered from the Nazis and from persecution in Europe, but the

Palestinians should not be made to pay for that. The refugees should be settled and you had to withdraw from the occupied territories, which would be proclaimed a Palestinian state

He further stated:

Israel was now established fact, the Arabs must guarantee her existence, but Israel must make possible the rise of a Palestinian state. The solution is to establish a Palestinian state in the Arab territories, which Israel should evacuate

Thus it is clear from the above discussion that Mr. Desai was firm on Israel's withdrawal and the emergence of a Palestine state.

The refusal to allow Israelis to establish a second Consulate in New Delhi in addition to the one Israel had in Bombay clearly shows that how much Mr. Desai was firm regarding the Palestine issue. Desai also stated that he could be out of the office if the visit of Mr. Dayan were to be published⁷⁸. As Dayan himself has recorded that he felt humiliated and was let down by the then Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Vajpayee.

Israel's Move for Establishing Diplomatic Relations with India:

At different stages Indian government was approached by Israeli government for the normalization of relations. The agenda had been pushed forth by various Israeli leaders. Ben Gurion was always interested in India and Buddhism. Ironically, BenGurion always did diametrically opposite to which India and Buddhism stood for. He wanted to win Nehru to Israeli side though this did not yield positive results. Golda Meir and Abba Eban were also working hard to win India and the latter in 1967 diplomatically repeated that Israel belongs to Asia in the Israel –Asia Friendship League⁷⁹. Yigal Allan also apparently held had a similar view and considered the third world as a global political force. The centre of his interest had been India. His aim was to strengthen India-Israel friendship and wanted this bond to form the anchor of Israel's Asian policy⁸⁰. Though Moshe Sharatt was very much interested in India he could not materialize his dream of Indo-Israeli diplomatic relations⁸¹. During the various crisis, which India faced, Israel tried to create opportunity for friendship in various avenues. In 1962, Israel not only helped India but also praised it for her self control and patience. In 1965, Israel supported India and accepted Kashmir as an integral part of India. Ironically Israel herself did not ever recognize Palestine as the integral homeland of Palestinians including Israel. In the following years, Israel supported

India's candidature to Security Council. Even during Bangladesh war. Israel sided with India and extended help in various ways. When the state of Bangladesh was declared, Israel along with India soon recognized her on February 4, 1972⁸².

In the second half of the 80's India witnessed a change in her political leadership. The death of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984 made Rajeev Gandhi the prime minister of India⁸³. Indira Gandhi emphasized on enhancing India's security seeking external help in optimal manner, trying to play a dominant role in south Asia and raising India's voice in the third world politics, which made a closer move towards the former USSR. Rajeev Gandhi though keeping the old policy began to drift slowly away from USSR⁸⁴. The west Asia policy under him remained more or less the same as before. He maintained the broad framework of supporting the liberation movements in the region⁸⁵. Nevertheless he wanted to maintain good relations with USA and the Jewish people, Rajeev met Jewish leaders when he visited USA⁸⁶. These meetings of Rajeev Gandhi with the Jewish leaders yielded tangible results, which enhanced relations between the Jews and the Indians. These gave impetus to the future development of relationship. It was the result of the Rajeev's meetings with the Jewish leaders in USA that a delegation of American Jewish Anti-Defamation League visited India. In the

delegation there were Mr. Burton Levison, chairman of ADL, Jess Hordes, national coordinator, Abraham Foxman ADL's Washington Bureau chief. They met senior official in the ministry of external affairs⁸⁷. This visit was used by Israel as campaign to have diplomatic relations with India.

The relation between India and Israel was not confined to open official meetings directly or through a third party, but also extended to secret meetings and consultations. After the assassination of Indra Gandhi, the Indian external intelligence agency-the research and analysis wing, RAW- invited Israeli security specialists to advice on the prime minister Security system⁸⁸. However, the advices of Israeli security specialists could not withstand the test of time when Ragiv Gandhi was assassinated. It was also reported that Indian and Israeli diplomats met secretly in Paris to discuss Tel Aviv's proposal for a joint action to destroy a Uranium plant at Kahuta in Pakistan. But the discussions did not yield any result. The reason might have been that India thought that her venture with Israel would be counter productive⁸⁹. At one point of time in 1988, it was reported that he even went to the extent of making a promise to Mr. Morris Abraham, President of a Jewish organization to upgrade Indo-Israeli ties when he (Rajeev) was in New York. Though all this was denied by him, latter⁹⁰. He also took some decisions like lifting of restriction on

Israeli sportsmen coming to India to participate in the Davis Cup⁹¹ and Indian team was even willing to play with Israeli team⁹² giving the rationale that India played against Israel in table tennis in years 1981 and 1983 in the former Yugoslavia and Japan respectively⁹³. Moreover he lifted the visa restriction on Israeli officials on private visits and created more avenues where there could be more meetings between Israelis and Indians. The consul general's post in Bombay, which was lying vacant since 1982, was reopened and its jurisdiction was formally extended to Kerala where there was a considerable Jewish population⁹⁴. India did not have any diplomatic link with Israel at that time but the prime minister took certain steps to create a room of common interest where they could play together certain role for the mutual benefits of both.

Gulf War of 1991 and India's Response:

The end of cold war had its ramification on international political environment. It brought in a different world order and its affect has spread far and wide. The disintegration of the former USSR and her socialist bloc led to the disbanding of Warsaw Pact, and left USA as the only super power⁹⁵. The USA policy having a free hand in conducting war against Iraq, by hijacking the United Nations should also be looked from the end of cold war political angle. In west Asia regional power, in the post cold war era, was concentrated at two

extremes; Iran in the Persian Gulf and Israel. The Gulf regimes mainly rely on the USA as their principle source of security and other Arab states suffered from the collapse of the former USSR. It made Israel unmatched military power in the region⁹⁶. This gave Israel to a great extent, a free hand in conducting her foreign affairs.

New Delhi voted for the UN resolution authorizing the use of force to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait and rejected Iraq's linkage of the Kuwaiti and the Palestinian problems. In January 1991, India also permitted the United States military aircraft to refuel in Bombay. The refueling decision stirred such domestic controversy that the Chandra Shakhhar Government withdrew the refueling privileges in February 1991 to deflect the criticism of Congress (I), which argued that India's nominal pro-United States tilt betrayed the country's non-aligned principles⁹⁷. Others argued that India's pro-US policies and its support to the United States during the war was the clear indication of India's shift from the old practiced non-alignment stand⁹⁸.

On the regional level the Gulf war of 1991 witnessed a major realignment of forces in the West Asia. The leading Arab countries including radical Syria joined the hands with the US in waging a devastating war against a fellow Arab country-Iraq⁹⁹. On the International level, the Gulf crisis confirmed the unchallenged

dominance of the US as the principal external influence and power, and signaled the corresponding demise of the Soviet Union as a significant regional actor. The Arab-Israeli conflict is also the area where the US has the greatest potential for being a catalyst for peace in the region (Middle East)¹⁰⁰. The Madrid Conference of 1991 in which the Arabs and the Israelis started talking face to face was the clear proof. It is because of this Madrid Conference that Israel and PLO recognized each other after two years of the conference, which was managed for the first time after the eight visits of James Baker to the region¹⁰¹.

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations with Israel under Narsimha Rao:

The decision of having diplomatic relations with Israel came from the Narsima Rao Government in 1992. After the Cold War era, India's decision making structure came under intense pressure and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel-a close ally of the US is the clear evidence of shifting of Indian policy from PLO to Israel.

Narsima Rao's decision of establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 was a hasty step, which was taken under the outside pressure than diplomatic prudence. The first sign of a change in the Indian pro-PLO and anti-Israel policy appeared little in the

meeting which was held between the then Indian Prime Minister, Narsima Rao and a Zionist leader, Isi Joseph Leibler in New Delhi in November 1991. The discussion centred round the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties between India and Israel. The Prime Minister's response, according to Leibler, was more positive and pragmatic than his predecessors. Further Leibler's talks with the Indian Prime Minister were facilitated by the US. Leibler openly admitted this in his press conference¹⁰².

The Leibler-Rao meet was followed by a more visible gesture of Government of India under Narsima Rao softened stance towards Israel when India voted for the revocation of the UN Resolution 3379 of November 1975 that had equated Zionism with Racism. The fact remained that mere revocation of the Resolution did not change the basic character of the Israeli State policy, which formed the *raison d'être* of the 1975 Resolution. The State of Israel was founded, and continues to exist, on the basis of a racist ideology, i.e., Zionism. Further, it led one to believe that the earlier motion (and India's support to it by implication) was a mistake or that Zionism had somehow changed and repented on its past policies. In reality it was neither, as the regime occupying Palestine became more outrageous and belligerent in pursuit of the expansionist dreams. Moreover, this was done without taking Indian public opinion into account, neither a

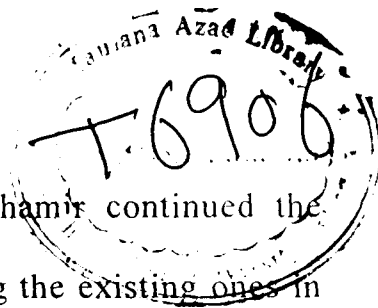
debate was held in the Parliament nor Opposition was taken into confidence. India's long cherished principled stand against Racism was thrown to the winds overnight.

In this context it would be interesting to note the observation made by the Indian representative at the UN, Rikhi Jaipal, in his statement of explanation of Indian vote in favour of Resolution 3379:¹⁰³

Zionism has deprived", noted the statement, "the Arab people of their national rights and of the right to self-determination. It is surely understandable that the victims of Zionism should regard it as a form of racial discrimination and it is, therefore, proper for the General Assembly also to regard it as such. To condone the evil effects of Zionism would be giving green light to various other forms of racism endemic in human societies.

Had this fact changed on 16th of December 1991, i.e., when India voted for repealing of the said Resolution?

The argument that by attending the West Asia Peace Conference in Madrid, Israel had changed itself and shown its desire to work for peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem did not hold good in the face of the then prevailing situation in the occupied



territories. The then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir continued the policy of building new settlements and expanding the existing ones in the West Bank and Gaza as if there was no peace process. There was no letup in the Israeli policy of brutalization, demolition, detention, and deportation vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Its adamant decision to deport twelve Palestinians from the occupied territories in the midst of the peace process was an example. This was done despite the fact that the UN Security Council passed a resolution strongly condemning it¹⁰⁴. A statement issued, on 5th of June 1992, by the Council of Arab Ambassadors in New Delhi clearly indicated how much had the State of Israel changed around six months after the revocation of the Resolution 3379. While reminding the world of the 25th year of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Council statement said that even as apartheid was being dismantled in South Africa, Israel had adopted a *“system of racial discrimination against indigenous Palestinian Arabs who are living on their own land as Second class citizens”*¹⁰⁵.

Hence, there were reasons to believe that in this case too it was the US factor, which influenced India's decision. India succumbed to US pressure after the discussions in New York and voted in favour of the pro-Israeli resolution. There was a general agreement, within the UN General Assembly, to proceed with the revocations sometime in

1992. This was obviously to wait and watch till Israel changed itself substantially vis-à-vis the Palestinians so as to justify a reversal of the 1975 Resolution. But the then US President, George Bush, had his own domestic political calculations and compulsions to push through the repealing of “Zionism is Racism” Resolution as early as possible. It may be recalled that the then Bush administration had virtually irked the powerful American Jewish Lobby on the well-known \$10 billion housing loan guarantee to Israel. The US President came down heavily on the Israeli Prime Minister on this issue, and ultimately Shamir had to bow down. Hence the repealing of the 1975 Resolution was said to be a balancing act. Moreover, this gesture was essential, argued the Bush administration, to coax Israel to soften its stand towards the peace process. Ridiculous logic indeed. The fact remained that in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse the US sought to use the UN for its own foreign policy ambitions. In this case too, the American diplomatic machinery at the UN was pressed into service to put pressure on countries, not excluding India, to support the US move in the revocation of the said Resolution by the General Assembly. Yasser Arafat, during his visit to New Delhi in the following weeks, candidly talked about the American pressure tactics¹⁰⁶. Further, the statement made by the then Indian Prime Minister before the Parliament just two days after India voted in the

UN vindicated this. While declaring that his government would use foreign policy as a dynamic instrument to further national interests, Prime Minister P.V.Narsima Rao listed out the overriding priorities of India's foreign policy in the post-cold war era. They were: preventing any threat to India's unity and territorial integrity, ensuring geopolitical security by creating a durable environment of stability and peace in Indian region, creating a frame work conducive to the economic well being of the people by encouraging a healthy external economic environment, and trying to restore, internationally, the centrality and criticality of the development in the evolution of political and economic policies all over the world. A careful analysis of the last two points clearly suggested the reasons as to why the weakling Prime Minister had to follow the US line. Because otherwise in his opinion the loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would not have flowed steadily resulting in the total collapse of India's "ambitious economic liberalization" programme. The foreign policy postulates as enumerated by the Indian Prime Minister was nothing but an abject surrender in the face of difficulties. India was virtually mortgaging its otherwise independent foreign policy stance to the outside dictates, which could harm the nation in the longer run.

On the same day, 18 December 1991, Yasser Arafat requested an audience with Prime Minister Rao probably to protest against India's volte-face. The President of the State of Palestine, who, in earlier times, visited this country more frequently than any other world leader, was in for a great surprise this time. His visit kept getting postponed on flimsy pretexts- that the Prime Minister was preoccupied with two foreign dignitaries and with the preparations for the Republic Day. It was indeed ironical that Prime Minister P.V.Narsima Rao, who headed the foreign ministry for a long time, spearheaded many important pro-PLO decisions, and, above all, had to establish close personal rapport with the PLO leader, would deny an audience to Arafat under various pretexts. What was more ironical probably was that while Arafat was having a difficult time in meeting the then Indian Prime Minister, hectic efforts were on to facilitate the meeting of Indian and Israeli diplomats in the US. An official level meeting, highest till then, between the Israeli Representative, Joseph Hadass and the Indian Deputy Chief of mission, Lalit Mansingh, took place at the Indian Embassy in Washington during the second week of January 1992. This meeting clearly indicated that the two countries were very close in establishing full diplomatic ties. In addition, this also brought to the open the active US role in facilitating this breakthrough.¹⁰⁷

Finally, New Delhi took the initiative and gave a date, which was not so suitable for the PLO leader as he was tied down by the outgoing West Asia Peace negotiations. But still he had to make it in view of the far-reaching developments. The receptions accorded to the visiting Palestinian dignitary were lacklustre at the worst and make believe warm at best. It sought to conceal the subterranean tensions in Indo-PLO relations. During the official level talks with the PLO chief, the Indian Prime Minister reiterated his consistent and unequivocal support for Palestine and the inalienable right of its people to self-determination. The Prime Minister also assured Arafat of extending all support to the Palestinians in whatever way possible to achieve the twin objective of establishing peace in the region and helping the Palestinian friends. While taking an appreciative note of the ongoing West Asia Peace Process and wishing it all success, Rao underlined the fact that India had a vital interest in peace and stability in a region so close to it. The security situation in West Asia, the Prime Minister added, impinged on India's security environment. On the whole, India tried to convince the Palestinian leader that it had not abandoned the Palestinian cause totally despite New Delhi's increasingly softened stance towards Tel Aviv. He was given the impression that while "our hearts" were still with the struggling and suffering Palestinian people

and with the martyrs of Sabra and Shatilla and the intifada but “our heads” were adjusting to the dictates of a fast changing world¹⁰⁸.

Arafat, on his part, gave a brief assessment of the peace talks. He expressed his strong conviction that India’s participation in the third round of West Asia Peace talks, scheduled to be held in Moscow on 28 and 29 January 1992, was essential, though the modalities were not discussed. However, the most significant announcement from the PLO chairman came during a press conference on the second day of his stay in New Delhi¹⁰⁹ “exchange of Ambassadors and recognition of Israel are acts of sovereignty, in which I can not interfere”, declared Arafat. “I respect any choice of the Indian government”, he further added hoping that such a change would not affect Indo-Palestinian relationship, which was “so strong”.

Arafat’s above mentioned statement was extensively reported in and interpreted by the media as a clear-cut go-head signal from the PLO to India to establish ties with Israel. In reality this was not so and reflected only a fragmented analysis of the whole thing. A careful reading of Arafat’s subsequent statements in the same press conference, made it evident that the PLO leader’s “clear message” was not so clear. It was a conditional signal. Arafat explicitly emphasized that India’s full diplomatic relations with Israel was not a pre-condition for its association with the peace process¹¹⁰. In other

words, diplomatic relations with Israel were not only the way by which India could be involved in the West Asia peace processes. To substantiate his point Arafat remarked that Jordan, along with many other Arab countries, represented at the peace conference, were without diplomatic relations with Israel. In another context Arafat stated that he would prefer if India established diplomatic ties with Israel “slowly” to enable the PLO to attain its objective at the peace talks.

Thus, an objective interpretation and correct understanding of Arafat’s message required that India should have followed a cautious and go-slow policy in establishing full diplomatic ties with Israel. It should have waited till the ground realities in the West Asian theatre changed substantially so as to remove the very basis of its decade’s old anti-Israeli policy. One failed to understand why Indian policy makers were in such a hurry? After all India had extended formal recognition to the state of Israel long ago, notwithstanding its earlier opposition. From the very beginning, India insisted on a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It neither encouraged nor supported the PLO position of dismantling the State of Israel. That was enough to convey that India accepted the fait accompli in West Asia. So what great difference did it make by establishing diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv? Israel’s mere attendance

of the Madrid peace conference in no way reflected a substantial policy change on its part towards the occupied territories and the Palestinians living under military occupation in gross violation of established international law. Further, India did not have a guilt conscience...like the Western power who had shut their doors to the Jews during the Holocaust...to compel us to look for ways to compensate the state of Israel. The architects of independent India's foreign policy were very clear about the purposes and justification behind an anti-Israeli posture. By then, however, India's course of action had already been decided. A particular section, within the foreign policy establishment, who claimed themselves to be the realists guided by so called realpolitik considerations had vigorously argued for the immediate establishment of ties with Israel. Finally, within a few days of Arafat's departure from New Delhi, India decided, on 29 January 1992, to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. It should not be forgotten that the announcement to this effect was made by the then Indian foreign secretary on the eve of the Prime Minister Rao's departure for the UN Security Council Summit in New York.

It is essential to emphasize that a section, favouring normal and friendly relationship with Israel, had always been there within the foreign policy establishment, and the opinion-making institutions like

the media and universities. At times, it even permeated into the political circles. This was mostly due to the persistent lobbying of the Zionists in India. And certainly, the Zionists are unbeatable as far as the subtle art of lobbying and creation of pressure groups within a country's decision-making structure is concerned. The establishment of an alien entity, called the state of Israel, on Palestinian land, was largely due to the Zionists success in this field. Hence, India, because of its geo-strategic importance in the world politics, never escaped the attention of the Zionists. So much so that even during the time of Indra Gandhi, who was known for her activist pro-PLO and anti-Zionist policy, the Zionists did not relent on their persistent efforts to effect a change of mind on the part of India in this regard. They did it when Rajiv Gandhi came to power. In both the times it was the same person: one Greville Janner, who happened to be the President of the Common Wealth Jewish Council¹¹¹. Interestingly, Janner was a member of the British Parliament and belonged to the Labour party. He was a Zionist in belief and orientation. Notwithstanding their constant attempts, the Zionist lobby failed to achieve any breakthrough due to two interrelated factors: the then international power balance, and India's foreign policy orientation which maintained a synthesis between ideology (of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-racism etc.) and the high ideals of the freedom

struggle. This never meant that the pursuance of national interest was given a go-by under the euphoria of ideology. But national interest was never computed by the calculus of loss and profit alone. After all, India stood as a symbol and source of inspiration for most of the third world countries having similar experiences of colonial rule and post-colonial nation-building processes. As a result, the section championing the cause of the Zionist lobby in India constituted a microscopic minority in the face of a broad anti-Israeli consensus within the country.

With the changing international scenario leading to the emergence of the new world (dis) order, the small section broadened its support base and gained enough, rather decisive, influence and credence within the decision-making setup. Emphasis on pragmatism constituted the fundamental basis of its pro-Israel pronouncements. Not surprisingly, this was the main plank on which the Jewish lobby had been operating in India. The fact remained that the so-called emphasis on pragmatism could not be seen in isolation. In international politics the terms like ideology and pragmatism cannot be always counter-posed. Adherence to any particular ideology cannot be devoid of pragmatic considerations. Similarly, any talk of pragmatism cannot be made in a vacuum free from ideological connotations. In the present space, for instance, the pragmatic

considerations were to adjust to the fast-changing needs of a US-dominated world. Economic liberalization, structural reforms, etc. are all essential characteristics of a capitalist path of development...the ideology which the US follows, champions, and, imposes on the developing world after the discredit of the socialist path of development. What better illustration could there have been for India to prove its adherence to the US line than the immediate and unconditional establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel. However, the protagonists of this line marshaled very sophisticated arguments to create an impression that the US had nothing to do with India's policy change towards Israel¹¹².

There are some main arguments put forward by the realist school, first, by establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel, India would be in a better position to involve herself in the West Asia peace process and thereby influence the Israeli policy in favour of the Palestinians. Those who believed this were probably living in a make-believe world, faraway from the dynamics of Israeli-Palestinian conflict and negotiations. It has already been stated how Arafat disputed this logic by stating that there were other ways and means by which India could have been involved in the peace process. What was more important was the degree of influence India could have exercised on Israel by becoming part of the peace process. By

attending the talks, the Indian prime minister or foreign minister could, at best, have delivered and addressed the theme of which was known to everybody, including Israelis. The crucial question was: would the Israeli have heeded to it? The Israeli position vis-à-vis the peace talks was governed by the domestic compulsions/pressures that the then Shamir government was confronted with and not by our sermons. For instance, the shift from the procedural wranglings to matters of substance and the report that the Israeli negotiators in Washington had offered a plan for Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories brought the wrath of two right-wing parties. This ultimately brought down the Shamir government for a while. And later the government survived a no-confidence motion in the Knesset due to the renewed support of one-the Tzomet party.

This exposed how precariously balanced was the Shamir government and how the power equation in Israel and a decisive bearing on its policy towards the Palestinians. Any other consideration was no consideration at all. Here, it may not be an exaggeration to say that even the president of the US, which has been a constant source of support - diplomatic, political, military and economic - to the continued existence of Israel from the beginning, at times found it difficult to influence the Israeli government beyond a point. This is for a country from which Israel receives billions of

dollars (approximately \$5 billion) in foreign aid annually. In view of this it sounded ridiculous to expect that India could influence Israel's policy even nominally.

Second, it was argued that in concrete terms there were distinct advantages for India in establishing contacts with Israel in specific areas like military modernization, agricultural innovation and investments of global Jewish establishment. India could also benefit in combating militancy in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir from the Israeli experience and expertise in this regard.

Both the arguments were nothing new and had been surfacing off and on. There had been a section, which from time to time argued that India's non-relationship with Israel put her at a disadvantageous position preventing New Delhi from playing a positive and purposeful role in bringing the two adversaries closer to a settlement. To what extent India has been playing a role in this regard ever since its full diplomatic relations with Israel is there for everyone to see. As for the concrete benefits it may be noted that as far back in the 1960s, the government of Rajasthan has shown interest in Israel's arid-zone forming techniques. On the question of countering militancy, the problems in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab had cropped up in the 1980s - a period when India took many decisions in support of the PLO. Why did India not establish diplomatic relations with Israel and

benefit from its expertise in combating militancy when the problem was at its peak?¹¹³.

Apart from the untenability of the above arguments, the main issue, while dealing with Israel was that moral aspects assumed more influence than the so called real politick compulsions which often signified an outright selfish pursuance of national interests without any regard to World peace and human values. Israel was, and perhaps still is a state unlike any other.

The establishment of diplomatic relations then certainly questioned and diluted India's commitment to the high ideals of non-alignment, which had been the guiding force of our foreign policy during all the decades after independence. Israel represented all that was anathema to the NAM. NAM's struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism and rights of small countries to determine and shape their own future needs no repetition. Of course, there were some who argued that with the discredit of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, imperialism was dead and similarly with the collapse of the Cold War, NAM became redundant. Such a view smacked of one's ideological ignorance and lack of knowledge about the dynamics of international politics. The significance of NAM extends beyond a general resistance to bloc division. It signifies a refusal to the mere political and economic appendage of the centre(s)

of military, political and economic power. It is a struggle for the protection of the developing countries from external domination and exploitation. Moreover, bloc politics is fast getting replaced by hegemonistic politics. Hence, the relevance of NAM is more than ever before in view of the emerging unipolar (politically) world and the inherent danger of domination over small and economically weak countries. At such a critical juncture, the establishment of ties with Israel meant that India was distancing itself from the NAM instead of giving direction to the movement in shaping the emerging international order. For instance, by voting along the US line for the repealing of Resolution 3379, India for the first time moved away from a collective NAM position. In any case the concrete advantages that people talked about were not so lucrative as to compromise with the basic elements of India's foreign policy. Third, it was argued that the emergence of an Islamic bloc in world politics made it essential that India change its Pro-PLO stance and move closer to Israel.

The talk of the emergence of an aggressive Islamic bloc is basically an American projected new horror in the Post-Cold War international politics¹¹⁴. While establishing ties with Israel, the Pakistani factor was also utilized to justify the untimely/hasty decision. It was argued that in the event of the emergence of an Islamic bloc, Pakistan would fully exploit it against India. Hence, there was a

need to counter this by forging an anti-Islamic alliance along with Israel and the US. The formation of an anti-Islamic alliance was, and still is, in conformity with the US-Israeli designs. But one fails to understand how it serves India's foreign policy goals and national interest. No doubt, the tensions between India and Pakistan is since 1947, but India has even then dealing with the West Asian and North African countries and it has maintained fairly cordial relationship with the Muslim countries. That the India's pro-Israeli policy necessarily meant a dilution of her commitment and support to the PLO and its cause became clear from subsequent events. By establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel, India did not become anti-PLO but certainly she developed apathy towards it. The contacts between India and PLO since then have been almost insignificant. The only high-level official contact between the two sides was the Rao-Arafat meet in Tunis on 20th November 1992. This too was a mere courtesy call, which the Indian prime minister paid to the PLO leader during a stopover in Tunis on his way to Dakar for the G-15 summit. The meeting lasted for about twenty minutes. There was no specific agenda even though Arafat was reported to have briefed Rao about the peace talks in general¹¹⁵.

As against this, Indo-Israeli cooperation stepped up to mark the new found friendship. This was specially so in the political arena. It

appeared that the Indian politicians were indeed suffering from a guilt conscience and wanted to compensate Israel for years of non-relationship. There was almost a scramble among Union Ministers and state chief ministers to pay visits to Israel. In a period of one year from June 1993-July 1994 as many as nine political leaders visited Israel. In addition as many as 18 Indian delegations visited Israel within a period of two years after establishing the diplomatic relations¹¹⁶.

India's move to establish diplomatic relations with Israel came into effect during the weak minority Government headed by P.V.Narsimha Rao in 1992. Before this move the Narsimha Rao government voted the United Nations resolution to repeal the longstanding United Nations resolution equating Zionism with Racism. Not only this India even also abstained from voting on a resolution condemning Israel over fresh settlements in the occupied territories, at an International Habitat Conference in Nairobi¹¹⁷.

When the diplomatic relations were established some claimed that Chandraswami was instrumental in the process, others that it was part of a process of wooing the US, Israel's mentor. The government claimed it was a key element in India's overall West Asian strategy, which had been devastated by its less-than-categorical stand on Iraqi

invasion of Kuwait. It was said the move would get India a seat at the West Asia peace talks.

The then Indian external affairs minister Madhavsinh Solanki argued that India's diplomatic ties were awaiting, 'genuine progress' at the ongoing peace talks. This was a clear dilution of earlier requirements of Israel vacating occupied Arab territories. India was looking for some reason to built formal ties, either at the ambassadorial or the consular level, with Israel. Meanwhile a decision had been taken to increase semi-official and private contacts with Israel. The Israeli consul in Bombay, Giora Becher, was invited to take part in a quasi-official seminar, also attended by high Indian government officials¹¹⁸. Oddly, India neither established a consular office in Tel Aviv, nor permitted its diplomats to go to Israel, not even to make contact with Palestinians in the occupied areas. Now India has moved from one extreme to plunge into diplomatic relations.

Relations with Israel are part of a process that began in the early 1980s when Indra Gandhi moved towards the US and began to open up the economy. Under Rajiv Gandhi the idea of a 'step by step' approach was given official sanction. However, according to an official, by 1991 'events overtook us'. The West Asian peace process got under way aided by the shift in the power balance following the

collapse of the Soviet Union. Iraq was neutralized and Syria, Israel's remaining great antagonist, sided with the US.

"India would have looked holier than the pope had it insisted on keeping Israel at arm's length when the Arabs sat across them at the negotiating table" were the remarks of a diplomat, recalling the decision-making that went on in the Ministry of External Affairs at the time. Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relation the former foreign secretary, A.P.Venkiteswaran remarked it as 'a correct step but premature'¹¹⁹. He was obviously basing his call on the principled and expedient position India had taken so far. There is seldom any single reason for any foreign policy step. So far India had primarily anchored its refusal to set up ties to the Arab-Palestine cum Israel issue.

It was decided that the Palestine-based principle had to be placed on a lower shelf—Whatever Indian spokesmen might say about India's longstanding commitment—than areas where India's security was considered more opportune to woo the US and the US Congress. The reshuffle did not mean ignoring other considerations, just a rearrangement of priorities. After all, in bridge the Jack of spades may be a trump in one deal but not in the next. India was playing an altogether new rubber.

If India were to make a decision primarily on the criterion of Israel's West Asian attitude, there was and there still is no case at all for establishing diplomatic ties. True, all of them have begun talking

but Israel continues to hold out and is in illegal occupation of an entire country and parts of others. It is getting what was denied to it without an inch or an ounce of concession. There are those who say:¹²⁰

Well, if India can have diplomatic relations with China and Pakistan, who are supposed to be in occupation of our own land, what is the problem in having ties and yet opposing the policies of some one who is occupying not our but some body else's territories?

This argument, used by the BJP, the palkhivalas, the general Jacobs, the Jethmalnis and the Subramaniam Swamys is utterly amateurish. For one thing, India's ties with China were reopened precisely to talk and iron out problems peacefully just as the Arabs and Israel have now decided to. More important, Israel is in occupation of an entire country whose creation was legitimized by the World's premier International body, is stealing all its water and is in the process of appropriating occupied lands through illegal settlements being allotted to immigrants welcomed on the basis of religion. A doctrine diametrically opposite to What India professes to stand for.

The one big misgiving in the minds of many Indians has been the fate of the Palestinians. It is recognized that these hapless people have been attacked not just by Israel, but all those who they thought were their friends. At various times they have been attacked by

Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait and Syria. Indian officials in Tel Aviv say Palestinian leaders and even the PLO have welcomed India's participation in the West Asia peace process. Being realists, they realize that India's establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel was inevitable. Another related worry among secular elements in India is the tendency of the Hindu right-wing to see Israel as a fellow 'Muslim-basher'

The changes in the relationship between India and Israel and between Israel and its Arab neighbours are the profound consequences of the end of the Cold war and the emergence of a multipolar world. Increasingly, as the world's remaining superpower shrinks to normal size, the responsibility of resolving regional conflicts will devolve on the region. Responsibility and accountability will be spread more evenly.

The development of relations between India and Israel or the decision of establishing diplomatic relations which is supposed to be part of the overall transformation in policy must be seen as part of this process.

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Chapter-3
Indo-Israel Military
Cooperation

India and the Regional Military Pacts:

Many military alliances under the umbrella of western powers were formed in the region. The Middle Eastern Defense Organization, MEDO, in 1952, the South East Asian Treaty Organization SEATO, the Central Treaty Organization CENTO, the Turko-Iraq Pact, and the Baghdad Pact in 1955 came into being. Nehru strongly opposed the MEDO. He also showed strong reaction to Baghdad Pact of 1955. India strongly opposed the creation of this military alliance on several grounds. First it aggravated political tension in the Arab World. Secondly it unwillingly encouraged and helped the very forces that it intended to restrain or suppress. In other words, it provoked the Soviet Union to enter the region in a big way with offers of massive arms and economic aid to anti-pact Arab states. But the reasons of the opposition to the pact from India was the inclusion of Pakistan in the pact. India considered Pakistan's inclusion in the pact as a serious threat to its (India's) security. Nehru argued that, 'the Baghdad Pact would affect India if not Today then Tomorrow or the day after'¹. India was strongly opposed to these alliances as they divided the Asian nations extending imperialist influence. In this regard Nehru commented, *"I fail to understand what good these little pacts and alliances can do in war or peace. One thing they certainly do is to vitiate the atmosphere and to bring conflict and bitterness"*²

To Him, the creation of the regional military pacts were unfortunate and did not help the cause of peace and security. The purpose behind the creation of such pacts, as he saw it, was an attempt by the Western Powers to not only “keepout the Communist Countries” from the region but also to secure for themselves the economic resources of the region, especially oil³.

As India was the advocate of ‘non-alignment’, so its reaction to these pacts or alliances was obvious. But it is the Same India which is now very close to Israel-a controversial state in the region, as far as security or military cooperation is concerned. Though its relations with the Jewish State remained cool for several years, especially before 1990’s. But the changes in the international geo-strategic environment, Gulf War 1990-91, disintegration of Soviet Union-a traditional friend and partner of the India especially in the military fields, emergence of USA as a lone super power, moreover, an unimaginative Indian leadership throwing principled strands of foreign policy to wind and hiding itself behind the curtain of ‘pragmatism’, pushed India to move towards West particularly Israel and the USA⁴. Israel has since then looming large on Indian scene and has then been selling arms under the pretext of helping India in combating terrorism. Here, some of our pro-Israeli friends call it a military cooperation and partnership.

Building up of close relations with USA and Israel means India's drift not only from the Arab countries of the region but also from 'non-alignment' which is being adhered by India almost since her Independence.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the architect of the Indian foreign policy. Regarding the foreign policy he stated, *"We, in India, have endeavoured to follow a foreign policy which we feel is not only in the interests of World peace but is particularly indicated for the countries of Asia. That policy is an independent one and on non-alignment with any power bloc"*. Anti-colonialism, anti-racialism, Asianism and solidarity, self-determination and non-alignment were the corner stone of his foreign policy⁵. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, kept the relations on a low key in deference to the value he attached to India's relation with the Arab countries, the Israeli authorities, nevertheless, tried from time to time to upgrade the relationship. All the successive governments in India were courteous to the visiting Israeli officials, without upgrading the level of diplomatic representation and sought Israeli help in military matters. Before the two countries established diplomatic relations, they cooperated clandestinely on military and intelligence matters. It was January 1963, a few months after the Indo-China conflict, that the government of India consulted the Israeli specialists in military

matters. It was then the Israeli chief of Army Staff and Chief of Military intelligence visited India for an exchange of views with some of the India's military top brass, including the chief of the Army Staff⁶. In the subsequent years, Israeli dignitaries visited India from time to time, for instance Yigal Alon, a member of the Israeli cabinet visited in 1965⁷ and Moshe Dayan in 1977⁸.

Secrets arms deals have been negotiated also between India and Israel. It was an open secret that Rajeev Gandhi's bodyguards used the legendary Israeli Uzi machine guns⁹. Similarly, on two separate occasions, Israel sent emergency shipments of arms to India during the times of war. The first was during the Sino-India war of 1962 when Israel responded to Nehru's urgent written communication and dispatched a shipload of automatic rifles, mortars, grenades and so on. Nine years latter, during the Bangladesh war, various weapons were imported from Israel¹⁰. There was also prolonged cooperation between India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and its Israeli counterpart, Mossad (the Israeli secret agency). Such cooperation existed even during the premierships of Indira Gandhi (1966-77) and (1980-84) and Rajeev Gandhi (1984-1989)¹¹. India's secret contacts with Israel were also substantiated by other sources. According to a controversial book, 'By Way Of Deception', written by Victor Ostrovsky, a formal Israeli agent and a weapons testing expert,

recruited by Mossad, India sent a secret mission to Israel, comprising of top nuclear scientists in 1984. According to him, the Indian delegation came secretly to Israel to exchange information¹².

Military cooperation between India and Israel Since 1992 to 1997:

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, there have been several visits related to the military field, contacts and consultations between Israel and India. While Israel was more eager to enter into a collaborative partnership with India in defense production and anti-terrorist measures, the Indian government was reluctant to respond. According to S. Krishna Kumar, minister of state for defense, *“there was no proposal, no initiative and no offer for any kind of defense ties with that country- the subject had not been even formally discussed in the defense ministry”*¹³.

India's traditional Arab policy had been mainly responsible for this, and was dictated by altogether different considerations. First, the Arab countries being the largest suppliers of oil to India and the sources of hard currency remittances from NRIS, India did not want to antagonize them by entering into diplomatic relations with a country hostile to them¹⁴. Further Indian policy vis-à-vis West Asia was governed by a combination of many other variables such as, support for non-alignment, pan-Arabism, Secularism and broadly conceived south-south cooperation. Of these, the policy of non-

alignment brought India closer not only to several West Asian states like Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, but also to the masses at large who were opposed to the policy of joining Pro-Western alliances pursued by some of the regional powers, since non-alignment was seen by them as a positive assertion of the ethos of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. There were others who believed that India's policy towards the Arabs and Palestinians was to appease the Muslim minority in India and also the Arab states. But they perhaps forgot that India's unequivocal support to the Palestinian cause since the very beginning was not based on Islamic solidarity but on the broad principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, justice, non-alignment and third world solidarity¹⁵.

Defense minister Sharad Pawar visited Israel in February in 1992. He indicated that the formal establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Israel had paved the way for drawing upon Israel's successful experience in curbing terrorism. And that India would like to benefit from the Israeli experience in Anti-terrorist operations¹⁶. Firstly the Indian defense minister willfully ignored that Palestinian struggle for Liberation was not an act of terrorism. Secondly even if it was Israel till now had been an alter failure to curb it. Weapons certainly are no solution to suppress a struggling people. Israel should have realized that political process was the only solution for curbing

'terrorism'. Krishna Kumar too said, 'technically no country could be excluded in such matters and Israel had certain defense capabilities worth nothing'¹⁷. By mid-1992, India and Israel had made considerable progress on the possibilities of cooperation in key defense areas. A six member Israeli defense team came to India and had meetings with several defense ministry officials¹⁸. The team had come at the invitation of the ministry of defense. This visit within the five months of establishing of diplomatic relations between India and Israel was a significant indicator of the rapid progress in Indo-Israeli military relations. In an interview, Prime minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin talked very positively of defense ties with India. *"I believe if there is interest on the part of India, I believe there is room for it. We are more than ready to cooperate with India in the field of defense whenever and wherever it suits India"*¹⁹. Regarding fundamentalism and terrorism ,he said that Israel had been a victim of this for a long time and emphasized that the same had been the concern of India²⁰. Raising the bogey of fundamentalism and terrorism has always served Israel's clandestine purpose. This victimizer was calling herself victim and Indian leadership was ready to be duped. J.N.Dixit's visit to Tel Aviv in the wake of Bombay blasts added to the speculation that cooperation in combating terrorism was a possible area of common interest²¹. In May 1993,

Israeli foreign Minister Shimon Peres visited India. He too dealt with the issues of terrorism and India's territorial integrity. He also supported India's stand on Kashmir. 'We support fully and completely the territorial integrity of India and agree with the Shimla Agreement',²².

Earlier Shimon Peres had emphasised Israel's support to India on the Kashmir issue. In this context one must not forget the single contribution of the PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat bringing closer, through his untiring efforts both India and Pakistan which resulted in the signing of 'Shimla Agreement',²³. This agreement till now forms the basis of Indo-Pak negotiations. Arafat who called the iron lady of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi sister proved to be a harbinger of peace and goodwill in the region.

In contrast the Zionist leader Shimon Peres had different designs. He suggested the changing of the demographic character of the valley of Kashmir on the pattern of Palestine²⁴. This suggestion by Peres speaks volume of the Zionist mindset. Peres was trying to sow permanent seed of discord as he and his friends in Israel had done vis-à-vis the poor Palestinians. It was a colonial solution by a colonialist. Moreover Israeli supply of arms can be seen as catalyst of arms race in the region.

General Herzl Bodinger from Israel visited India in 1995. During his visit, India was offered a package deal, which included airborne warning and control systems, remotely piloted vehicles, access to an air platform for an anti-detection and anti-jamming maneuvers and specialized weapons²⁵. In July 1995, a high level Indian defense team led by defense secretary K. A.Nambiar went to Israel. The defense secretary's trip was necessitated by the urgency to identify the avionics and weapons systems for the Mig-21, which was being upgraded for India under an Indo- Russian Joint Venture. The talks on the upgradation of the Russian T-72 tank too were part of agenda at that time. India showed interest in remotely piloted vehicles too²⁶.

President Ezer Weizman visited India in January 1997. He underlined India as a potential partner in the area of aircraft industry²⁷. One of his aims was to push for an increase in 'defense cooperation' an euphemism for the selling arms to India under one pretext or another. During his visit the two countries decided to exchange military attaches. Following the visit, Senior Indian officials visited Israel and inspected defense systems. India's top defense ministry scientists too visited the state of Israel secretly and toured satellite and missile programmes²⁸.

Bhartiya Janta Party and Its Military Collaboration with Israel:

A few days after India tested its nuclear devices in May 1998, a top ranking delegation from the Israel Arms Industry (IAI) toured India. The purpose was to accelerate the sale of Israeli made pilot less aircraft and anti-ship missiles²⁹. India's defense secretary T.K.Banerjee led a high level military delegation to Israel in February 1997³⁰. Chief of the Army Staff General V.P.Malik toured Israel in 1998³¹. According to India's military attaché, Col.Brown, it was a goodwill visit, 'we are looking forward to building a long lasting defense relationship'³². The principal secretary to the prime minister, Brajesh Mishra met with Israeli Prime minister Ehud Barak. This meeting was regarded as part of the ongoing diplomatic dialogue. The dialogue between India and Israel touched on strategic, political and economic issues³³.

In 1998, the IAI finalized a large-scale deal with India to sell advanced electronic Equipment³⁴. The equipment was developed and manufactured in Israel and comprised no American technology. But the US was against the deal because of India's Nuclear Tests of May-1998 and demanded Israel for halting the deal. US pressure on Israel came after the India's nuclear tests which were carried by India in May 1998. US argued that the deal can violate an international arms control treaty³⁵. However, Israel did not agree and resisted the US

pressure to cancel the sale of Advanced Electronic Equipment. AEE to India. It is reported that Israel sold the advanced electronic warfare system to India despite the strong objections from the U.S.³⁶. The nuclear tests carried out by India under BJP rule in 1998 started arm race in the region. Pakistan became nuclear. This was a god send opportunity for the Israelis to take advantage of the situation During the Kargil Incidents in Kashmir in 1999, Israel agreed to speedup shipments of arms and military equipment to India on the request of the Indian government to accelerate the arms orders, which had been submitted earlier. The Israeli defense establishments responded favorably³⁷. Kargil war of 1999 was a tremendous opportune moment for Israelis to market their military products when India was reeling under the sanctions.

To expand their cooperation in the area of defense, India and Israel, in September 1999 negotiated a fresh conventional arms deal estimated at about 150-200 million dollars a year³⁸. In April 2000, an Israeli company, Soltam Systems Ltd. won a crucial contract worth 47.5milliondollars to upgrade Indian artillery out competing its French, Swedish, Czech and South African Competitors³⁸

The signing of a two billion dollar arms agreement between India and Israel in July 2001³⁹ was considered an important step in the field of defense cooperation. Under the agreement Israel Aircraft

Industry could deliver to India aircraft, radar systems and surface-to-surface missiles via Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL). The IAI will also deliver surface to surface naval Barak missiles, worth 280 million dollars, pilot-less planes valued at 300million dollars, and Green pine radar systems, estimated at 250 million dollars⁴⁰. In addition, the IAI will develop super Barak missile for India, which will have twice the capability of the original Barak surface-to-surface missiles. Potential deals withal included the upgrading of Russian built Indian warplanes-MIG-21s, MIG-29s and sukhois. As well as Mil-8s and Mil-17 helicopters and T-72 tanks⁴¹.

It is noteworthy that Israel agreed to sell its arms to India despite American objections. The US tried to block Israeli-Indian military cooperation after India conducted five nuclear test explosions in May 1998. In the earlier part of 1999, Israel sold an advanced electronic warfare system to India over objections from the US⁴².Israeli officials defended the sale by saying the Weapons system was defensive in nature and wholly developed in Israel with no US funding or technology⁴³. Although the Phalcon surveillance aircraft owes nothing to US technology. But combines Israeli technology with a Russian airframe⁴⁴, the US was opposed to the Phalcon deal between India and Israel arguing that some of the avionics were American made and hence could not be transferred to a third country,

especially one like India which was under the US sanctions. Israel was also forced to terminate a potential 1 billion dollar early warning phalcon deal with China in July 2000. The termination happened only after the intense pressure by US⁴⁵. Israel undermined the US pressure on Indo-Israeli phalcon deal⁴⁶. 'Israel and India have good and developing defense ties. These have no connection to the existing dialogue between Israel and the US relating to technological issues' were the words of deputy spokesperson of the Israeli defense ministry. 'The dialogue between the US and Israel in aspects of technology is ongoing and no change has occurred in the situation relating to the Phalcon' he pointed⁴⁷. Moreover up till now the military cooperation was unilaterally benefiting Israel at the cost of Indian taxpayer.

An important dimension of the growing Indo- Israel military relations has been in the field of establishing joint ventures to manufacture defense hardware in India, ranging from missiles to armoured vehicles and their selling to third world countries. According to Doran Suslik, director of corporate communication for IAI, the proposal could cover the transfer of sophisticated technology and production techniques developed by Israel's state owned defense industries. 'Israel's policy is to involve clients in local defense production and manufacture of Israeli equipment in cooperation with

local defense industries through transfer of production, techniques and technologies to industrial counterparts in the client country' were the words of Doran Suslik⁴⁸. The decision would depend on the volume of the bilateral trade and licensing production approvals given by both Indian and Israeli governments. Israel has already established similar relationship with defense industries and defense Organization in the Switzerland, Belgium and Finland⁴⁹. The issue of joint production was discussed when India's defense secretary Yogendra Narian, accompanied by senior military and civil officials paid a four day visit to Israel in May 2001. According to an Israeli defense ministry official, Joint production of defense equipment is possible because of 'the quality of India's high-tech manpower, its considerably lower production costs, high industrial capability and its solid and reliable experience'. The official further argued, 'because of our close strategic understanding, a formal agreement or a memorandum of understanding is unnecessary and actual co-production can be decided between India and Israeli military industries on an item-by-item basis'⁵⁰.

Among the Israeli hardware that can be jointly produced with India are the Popeye missile and all-terrain Merkava tank. 'Neither has been discussed but we are certainly open to Indian proposals,' the Israeli official said⁵¹. Earlier, in 1998, India and Israel were

negotiating on potential joint production in India of Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles and fast patrol boat projects⁵². Israel's interest, however, of selling its Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to India could be traced as far as back as 1992 when in the middle of that year, soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, the former was offered the UAV by Israel when a team of Israeli experts from Malat, a subsidiary of the State-owned IAI visited New Delhi⁵³.

Yogendra Narian's visit to Israel in 2001, of course, reciprocated a trip to India earlier in 2001 by a high level Israeli military team led by General Yaron to examine India's defense production capabilities. Narian's visit also came close on the heels of a trip by Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sushil Kumar to Israel earlier in the same month, reflecting the rapidly growing defense ties between the two countries. Israel, besides selling arms to India, at the same time, has also expressed its desire to buy arms from India. Israel is eager to buy the pilot less target aircraft Lakshya from India

Israel's defense source said 'while we are intending to sell one weapon to India, we want to buy another from them'⁵⁴. It is a matter of interest how far India has been successful in selling some of its indigenous military products to Israel-data so far are missing or there is nothing to mention what. Stating that there are several other

defense equipment that Israel wanted to acquire from India, the sources said, the issue had come up in various meetings between officials of the two countries and 'negotiations are going on'.

India is currently Israel's second largest market, after China, for military hardware. India is one of the 39 countries with which Israel has signed 'secret cooperative agreements' to prevent information leaks from Joint security projects⁵⁵. As per the agreement, in the event of an information leak or transfer of sensitive information to a third party by a spy, both countries must work together to investigate the matter. It is indicative of the rapidly growing defense ties between India and Israel that since of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 until the middle of the 2000, there had been more than fifty military related visits, contacts and consultations between the two countries⁵⁶.

L.K. Advani and Jaswant Singh's Visits to Israel:

The visits in the middle of 2000 by the Indian Home minister, L.K.Advani and the foreign minister, Jaswant Singh to Israel have given fresh impetus to bilateral ties between India and Israel. Before their visits to the Jewish state India organized its first-ever trade fair in Israel in May 2000 and following its success, India and Israel have agreed to increase cooperation in high-tech sector, especially in software, telecommunications and information technology sectors.

L.K.Advani visited Israel in the middle of June 2000. He was the first senior Indian Minister to visit Israel since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992. Besides, Israel Advani's foreign tour included France and U.K and he was accompanied by a galaxy of security officials including Union home secretary Kamal Pande, intelligence Bureau chief Shyamal Dutta. Director General of BSF-E.N.Rammohan and CBI head B.K.Raghavan. The main agenda of the team was to get the counter-insurgency tactics of Mossad and the study of the security systems of France and the U.K⁵⁷. In fact, the issue of counter terrorism has been widely considered as an area in which both India and Israel used to have identical concern. Israelis are generally understood to have extensive experience and expertise in counter terrorism. India's defense minister Sharad Pawar when visited Israel on 23 February 1992 said, ' the new Indian move had paved the way for drawing on Israel's successful experience to curb terrorism'. This statement on the part of Sharad Pawar must, at best, be construed as his personal viewpoint and many in India disagreed with it. Pawar conveniently forgot that Israel was not curbing terrorism but a people's movement, which over the years had become militant on account of brutal suppression of the genuine demands of Palestinians. He also said that such an exchange would be of mutual advantage to the two states,

adding that India would also like to get acquainted with Israeli experience in developing technology for anti-terrorist operations⁵⁸. Pawar in his capacity as defense minister miserably failed to see that military technology has no answer to insurgency. Israel up till now has failed in this regard. During his visit to Israel, India's Home minister L.K. Advani discussed with top Israeli police brass various techniques employed by them to curb terrorism. He also had, after visiting the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon, first-hand knowledge of Israel's border management techniques and said that it would help India in effectively managing the Indo-Pak border to tackle 'cross border terrorism'. Obviously home minister's visit to Israel had attracted attention because of the apparent consultations on terrorism and sharing of intelligence. Israel is well known for its exceptionally professional intelligence apparatus. Leading defense expert Jasjit Singh observed that, *"Israel is a great deal' for India to learn from the principles and practices followed by Israel but he further said that,' we need to constantly bear in mind the structural and situational differences between the two countries"*⁵⁹. Advani's visit was followed by external affairs minister Jaswant Singh's visit to Israel in June 2000. Jaswant became the first external affairs minister who visited Israel after both the countries established the diplomatic relations in 1992, Signalled another step, which would

further strengthen ties between the two countries. In his dialogue with the Israeli leadership Singh was able to score an assurance that Tel Aviv would keep New Delhi's security concerned in mind while selling arms to Beijing and would not encourage any deal that jeopardize Indo-Israel relations⁶⁰. On account of India's obsession with Pakistan in recent years the one factor that has been ignored is Israel's arms sales to China. China is a major concern for India in terms of defense and security and Israel's supply of arms to it should be seen in this context. As part of newfound bonhomie, the two countries agreed on a structured dialogue to broad base and strengthen relations in the political, economic and security spheres. They decided to set up a Joint ministerial commission to have regular dialogue on security and counter terrorism and on substantial cooperation on information technology⁶¹. The ministerial commission will meet twice a year, alternately in the two capitals, to give India and Israel an opportunity to discuss all political issues at the bilateral, regional and global levels.

Emphasizing the importance of fighting terrorism, Singh even told David Levy, the Israeli foreign minister, about the 'need to set up a global mechanism against terrorism, and asked that there should be intelligence cooperation in between the governments of Israel and India'⁶². He suggested that the two countries should take the lead in

the fight against terrorism, Saying that the two countries had much combined experience in this regard. Besides strengthening bilateral cooperation in various fields and bringing the two countries closer, Singh's visit to Israel could be considered as significant in the political field. Israel officially acknowledged that the Singh's visit had broken 'a psychological barrier that had created a political gap in ties' between India and Israel. Israel has stressed that despite establishment of full-fledged diplomatic relationship between the two countries and bilateral cooperation in various fields, a political gap had existed before Singh's visit and the 'gap' has been bridged because of the Indian external affairs minister's visit to Israel in June 2000⁶³. Aircraft, surveillance equipments, main battle tanks, missiles and the navy are the military fields in which both the countries have shown deep interest for cooperation. Indeed, India opened itself to Israeli military hardware benefiting Israeli arm sellers and triggering arms race in the region.

India has a complex history of military collaboration with a number of countries. Scrutiny of its defense collaboration initiatives with US, Russia, France and Israel is of high significance. For over a decade successive Israeli governments were trying to initiate and develop deeper and wide ranging cooperation and collaboration with India in economic and defense fields to serve their geo-economic and

geo-political interests. From the Indian side, L.K.Advani has always been a strong advocate of such relations with Israel; for, in any event Advani's own political party and the other like minded radical Hindu parties saw in Israel a valuable strategic partner on the grounds of mutually common anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan agenda. L.K.Advani and his BJP is fully in command of Indian decision-making process for the first time after independence, 'the Vajpayee government has shifted its foreign policy focus from Arab nations to the Zionist State-Israel'⁶⁴

— The recent major shift in India's foreign policy and diplomacy relating to Israel, from a 'quiet' recognition to a very active collaboration, has received much media coverage both in India and Muslim countries. India and Israel are so far concentrating on interaction and cooperation in two fields; one, according to Kesava Menon, intelligence cooperation to help each other against the Muslims of various regions who according to the perceptions of these countries, are source of threat to their national security⁶⁵ and second cooperation in the conventional and high tech military fields. Kesava Menon has further elaborated that Israelis perceive Muslim terrorist threat coming mainly from Syria and Iran, Whereas India obviously sees that threat coming from Pakistan, Afghanistan and its

connections in the Arab countries. However, what is important to note in this context is:⁶⁶

the details of Advani's meetings with Israeli rulers, particularly the heads of the Israeli home ministry and its intelligence agencies Mossad and Sabak, reveal that the arrangements he had made for the Joint Indo-Israel espionage operations in key areas of the Muslim world make the Indian embassies in these Muslims countries the eyes and ears of the world wide cloak and dagger Israeli Spy network.

As for Israeli military assistance to India, Israeli equipment is certainly sold at an exorbitant price in comparison to similar equipments provided by US, France, UK. However, what is important is the fact, as asserted by Kesava Menon, that, 'Israel is also not likely to cut supplies on the grounds of secondary considerations on the political or human rights front'⁶⁷. Israelis are hardly concerned about the purpose of the use of arms purchased by them. as long as they go on pocketing profits and fomenting troubles in the region.

It is obvious that both India under BJP and Israel would try their utmost to carry through these new found deals, because they have some objectives which include induction of the controlled military high-tech of US/ Western origin through Israel and utilizing

the Israeli intelligence expertise in eliminating not only ongoing insurgencies in Muslim majority areas but other areas in India. On the Israeli side, their objective is the narrow self interest which include finding new avenues through India for their arms/intelligence expertise/commercial sales in the Asian and other third world regions, so as to rid Israel of its dependence on US and Europe, and utilizing Indian embassies, media leverage and lobbies etc in the Arab world and other Muslim countries for expanding the Mossad and Sabak network⁶⁸. A very dangerous game these two have started in the region.

After the nuclear explosion by India in May 1998 both India and Israel have come in for criticism and have been accused of cooperation in the nuclear field. A number of attempts were made to link Indian actions to Israel. New Delhi reported that Pakistan's foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan claimed that for the nuclear tests Israel supplied the devices to India⁶⁹. Further the Centre reported that Pakistan government claimed that the Israeli F-16s were preparing to attack Pakistani nuclear facilities⁷⁰. The Arab league also showed anger to India and accused Israeli's military and nuclear cooperation with India and warned against its consequences to the Arab and Islamic world. The league's deputy secretary General Mohammad Zakria Ismail said that the league had information to prove the

alleged nuclear cooperation⁷¹. New Delhi claimed that Pakistan is spreading false information regarding Indo-Israeli nuclear cooperation. She further claimed that Pakistan is seeking to delegitimise and isolate India in the Arab world and looking for Iran and Arab for support after facing sanctions after its own nuclear tests⁷².

Israel kept a low profile with respect to these events and showed no interest to involve her in India/Pakistan/China triangle. The Israeli deputy minister of defense declared in the Knesset that 'Israel has nothing to do with the tension on the Indian subcontinent. Israel does not regard either India or Pakistan as an enemy and all the reports to the contrary have been false'⁷³. After fomenting problem Israel was conveniently lying low and denying the reports vehemently.

Indian diplomats have denied allegations that Israel assisted India in the May 1998 tests⁷⁴ and claimed that the speculation of Indo-Israel cooperation in the nuclear field is baseless. Indian ambassador to Israel Ranjin Mathai denied any cooperation with Israel in the nuclear field⁷⁵. External affairs ministry spokesperson stated that 'India had nothing to do with its nuclear program'. Alon Ben David, Israeli army affairs correspondent said, 'It is important to stress that the defense ties between India and Israel did not deal with

nuclear issues, only conventional arms export'⁷⁶. So far as Israel's response to India's nuclear tests was concerned, Israel's foreign ministry did not condemn India's nuclear tests⁷⁷. There is however, a section in Israel, which brought forth the view that India's nuclear tests could indirectly pose a threat to Israel. Some of them also believe that these tests provide momentum to the Pakistani nuclear program and gave it more legitimacy and Pakistan's nuclear program was supposed to be the source of the so called Islamic bomb⁷⁸. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman said that, 'we worried that Pakistani tests will give boost to Tehran and the Baghdad to acquire nuclear weapons'⁷⁹.

✓ Indo-Israeli military cooperation did not fade in the wake of nuclear tests by India. Israel was providing India with intelligence on Pakistan from its spy satellite and India gave permission for Israeli military intelligence experts to undertake missions on Indian Territory to monitor points of interest⁸⁰. The deal on the AEE too was made even after the nuclear tests carried by India in May-1998.

Israel is heavily dependent on the US for military as well as political and economic support. Much of Israeli defense equipment has US components. For export of these items, Israel has to seek the consent of the US. In 1991, Israel was brought under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and this seriously limited its

ability to export sensitive technologies to India. For instance, the Arrow anti-missile project, developed by Israel and funded by the US, comes under the technology rights agreements between the US and Israel. US blocked the sale of many military types of equipment from Israel to India. Because of the poor relations of US with India⁸¹. After the nuclear tests in 1998, the US imposed sanctions on India. But these sanctions could not stop the growing Indo-Israeli relations. Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra visited Israel in September 1999, gave a major boost to Indo-Israeli relations. Professor Sherman a strategic analyst and professor of international relations at Tel Aviv university during his visit to New Delhi in June 1999 remarked, *“India can take maximum benefits from Israel’s advanced technology in modern warfare. India and Israel seem to be compatible in numerous fields and all it requires is systematic efforts and identification of fields of common interest among both sides to provide greater mutual understanding”* On security threats faced by both India and Israel his words were, ‘India and Israel can become each other’s strategic partner in a joint collaboration to counter the threats of terrorism’. Professor Sherman was clutting India with Israel since according to him both were facing security threats. How could Professor Sherman ignore the naked reality that Israel was offensively setting on the large chunk of Palestine territory

and talked of security for itself? As for Indian security her situation is entirely different from Israel.

According to professor Shermon, "Israel has a long experience of war which can be of help to India. It can take maximum benefit from Israel's advanced technology in modern warfare. Its avionics and radar surveillance systems can be extremely helpful for India in patrolling its border areas". Nevertheless Israel cooperated with Indian military establishment to design advanced aerial vehicles for surveillance, fast attack patrol boats and automated maneuvering combat instrumentation, an excellent training device for combat pilots. Israel also worked jointly with India to upgrade its Mig-21s and to equip them with Israeli electronic avionics. It is high time that Israel must also have some experience of peace making.

✓ The potential of Indo-Israeli cooperation has assumed significances after the kargil crisis with avenues of cooperation in security, defense and technology sectors opening up. During the kargil conflict, Israel was one of the countries to extend a lot of backstage help to India on various aspects from information sharing to strategic consultations⁸². During the kargil war, Israel responded magnificently, despite pressures from various quarters not to supply UAVs for high altitude surveillance, laser-guided system and many other items were supplied within twenty-four hours⁸³. Israel has also

emerged as India's second largest defense supplier after Russia. It is expected that Israel may emerge as India's number one defense supplier⁸⁴. A high level delegation of Israeli anti-terrorism experts traveled to India in September 2001. The delegation was led by officials from the counter-terrorism bureau of the prime minister's office, included representatives of the Israeli police and military intelligence. The team also visited the Jammu and Kashmir state to assess the India's security needs in Kashmir⁸⁵. Israel is also to train four battalions of nearly three thousand Indian soldiers for specialized anti-insurgency strikes, adding to their training in desert, mountain, jungle and counter-hijacking and hostage crisis situations. New Delhi's turn to Jerusalem for combat soldier expertise is due, in part, to disappointing results in border clashes with Pakistani forces and to the December 13, 2001 suicide attack on Indian parliament house. Among the many tasks expected of them, the newly trained Indian troops are expected to stop infiltration from across the border into India via the contested Kashmir region⁸⁶. Bilateral defense relations had also been kept under wraps to prevent them from affecting India's ties with the Arab states, including Palestine, on whom it is largely dependent for its energy needs. But the kargil conflict changed all that, for at that point Israel dug deep into its military equipment reserves to supply ordnance and unmanned aerial vehicles in order to

give the ill-prepared and ill equipped Indian army the edge over Pakistan in the 11-week long war of 1999. It is high time India should start political process since Israel is a major beneficiary on account of the disturbed conditions in the region.

The director general of Israeli defense military, Major general (retd.) Amos Yaron, made an unscheduled stopover in Delhi, while ostensibly on a trip to Bangkok in 2001, to meet Yogendra Narian, the then defense secretary, to establish a Joint Working Group for defense. Headed by the respective defense secretaries the Joint Working Group, which meets every year alternately in New Delhi and Tel Aviv, has prepared a road map to cement the military ties, deal with defense purchases and joint ventures and to coordinate intelligence and related security matters⁸⁷.

✓ Indian government is seeking enhanced Israeli cooperation to counter all potential threats including nuclear, from Pakistan and deals are already underway to acquire sophisticated weapons worth billions of dollars with a possibility of New Delhi buying Submarines capable of carrying nuclear warheads from Tel Aviv⁸⁸. In the last decade the two countries have built extensive military collaboration, involving arms sale, equipment upgrades, and the transfer of technology and joint weapons development programmes. The latest multi billion dollar defense agreements are seen as another watershed

in the Indo-Israel strategic partnership. Under these agreements the Israeli aircraft industry will supply India and latter build Jointly the Barak naval surface-to-surface missiles and a plan to develop the super Barak missile at a cost of approximately \$250 million. Further shipments from Israel to India include Unmanned Aerial Vehicles worth approximately \$300 million and the green pine radar system, which is an integral part of the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system worth \$250 million. Military intelligence reports suggest Israel has also been given a contract to fence off areas in the volatile Kashmir region and is the probably only foreign state, which has access to sensitive installations in the border region. The two countries at several occasions were ready for joint military exercise in the region, if this were happen, it could have a significant impact on the security of the most volatile regions in the world i.e. South Asia and the Middle East⁸⁹. Israeli experts are training their Indian counterparts in checking infiltration along the borders, detecting explosives, defusing bombs and the use of many other devices and tactics developed by Israel.

/ Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres visited India in January 2002. His visit was a clear indication of the Israeli desire to upgrade relations between the two countries. In his discussions with the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, External Affairs Minister,

Jaswant Singh, Home Minister-L.K.Advani and Defense Minister George Fernandes, where 'terrorism' featured prominently. He offered India 'every possible help in every possible way' as India seeks to defend itself against external terrorism. According to Peres, India can benefit immensely in the area of defense as Israel has a highly military industry. At a press conference, he said that his country would be by India's side in the fight against terrorists in every possible way. Peres, like many of his ilk visiting India before him raised the bogey of 'terrorism' and under the pretext prepared ground for massive arms sales to India by Israel.

Counter insurgency and border management have been the areas where cooperation between the two countries was thought to be necessary. India finds it useful to learn from Israel's experience not only in counter insurgency but also night warfare and air surveillance. The background to all this has been provided by a growing understanding of the challenges facing both countries. In this direction there has been India-Israel strategic dialogue in September 2001, which discussed matters like the threat to both countries from terrorism, developments in south and west Asia and the future direction of their cooperation. While New Delhi and Tel Aviv have taken steps to further economic and cultural cooperation, defense and security have emerged as areas of primary importance. This became

clear in November 2001 when a seven member Israeli military delegation visited India under the leadership of Amos Yaron, director general of Israel's defense ministry and met top Indian officials, including the defense secretary and discussed the matters related to security and closer military cooperation⁹⁰. Of immediate relevance, the post September 11,2001 situation has resulted in increasing strategic cooperation between the two countries, defense and related interaction intensifying manifold from even the high levels reached in the post-Kargil days, 'We continue to cooperate, collaborate and enhance the relations that already exist', remarked Amos Yaron, director general in Israel's defense ministry⁹¹. How far this cooperation has resulted in benefiting India is yet to be seen. As for Israel any body can say that it has not been able to curb Palestinian militancy inspite of its sophisticated arms and ammunitions, used against them.

The quietly growing strategic cooperation between India and Israel is the result of shared perceptions and short sightedness of the two governments. Increasing convergence of Indo-Israeli strategic interests is leading to a wide-ranging partnership between New Delhi and Tel Aviv with intelligence sharing, counter insurgency operations and border management forming the core of this emerging relationship. Israel has rapidly emerged as India's second largest

defense partner after Russia. While Russia provides the platforms to India tanks, aircraft and ships. Israel supplies the systems that go with them, including radar, electronic control measures and weapons. Israel defense projects with India have included avionics upgrades for Indian-built MiGs, unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and the transfer of the green pine fire control radar system⁹². The burgeoning military ties have been underlined by the flurry of visits to Israel by Indian top ministry and defense brass, including the chief of the naval staff, the army vice-chief and the secretary, defense production, in the last two decades. The two countries have also been collaborating on missile technology. India's top missile scientist, now the president of the country, APJ Abdul Kalam also visited Israel twice before the 1998 nuclear tests carried by India in the same year⁹³.

There are constant Indo-Israeli contacts on various levels, especially in the realm of cooperation in counter terrorism measures and purchase of Israeli arms. The second meeting of the Indo-Israel Joint Working Group on counter terrorism was held in New Delhi on 27-28 May 2002. The Israeli delegation was led by Zvi Gabay, deputy director general in the Israel ministry of foreign affairs and major general Uzi Dayan, the national-security advisor of Israel. The Indian delegation was led by Shri R.M.Abhyankar, special secretary (East) in the ministry of external affairs. This dialogue was held in the context

of India's cooperation with the international community to counter the scourge of terrorism and to address this problem in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373. Israeli intelligence agencies have been intensifying their relations with India's security apparatus and are involved militarily within the province of Kashmir⁹⁴.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and the pentagon, the United States lifted all the sanctions, which were imposed on India after its 1998 nuclear tests. This trend reached new heights when US has given the go-head to Israel for the sale of the Phalcon air- borne radar system worth one billion dollars to India⁹⁵. While Israel sees India as a comrade in the fight against 'Islamic militants', the US has a somewhat broader agenda to pursue with New Delhi, particularly India as a counter-balance to China, which US hawks see as Washington's strategic competitor in Asia. 'India is the most overlooked of our potential allies in a strategy to contain china' were the words of Lloyed Richardson of the Hudson Institute, a think tank very close to the administration⁹⁶.

Washington put on hold the Phalcon deal last year (2002) when Pakistan and India were mobilizing their forces along their common border. Tensions between the two countries have since eased considerably and there was hope that a new peace initiative by Indian

Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee may yield progress. But the fact that the deal was approved before any indication of serious forward movement in the bilateral talks suggests that more hawkish forces within the administration are winning the argument over the value of tilting evermore sharply in India's direction⁹⁷. India is the biggest customer for Israel's sophisticated military industry, which last year (2002) ranked 5th in the world among all arms exporters, after the US, the European Union, Russia and Japan. The Phalcon and Arrow deals are likely to propel Israel even higher in the ranking over the next few years, arms experts argued. Almost one half of Israel's total military sales last year (2002) of \$4.2 billion went to India⁹⁸. Before the Phalcon deal came up for consideration, Israel sold Green pine early warning stations to India for \$400 million (US) and Barak missiles for \$300 million (US). Israel is also refurbishing India's fleet of MiG 21s, MiG 29s and T-72 tanks. Non state Israeli companies are also involved. Soltam has refitted Russian 133mm canon into 155mm howitzers, as well as bidding for a half billion dollars tender to fit the canons on trucks. Rafael, the state owned corporation for weapons development is hoping to provide Gil anti-tank missile systems. Meanwhile, the Indian air force is interested in Elisra Electronic Warfare systems⁹⁹.

Ariel Sharon's Visit to India:

Indo-Israel defense relations were more strengthened when Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, the main culprit behind the innocent killings of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in 1982, visited India in September 2003. He was accompanied with a 150 member delegation of officials and business people, including chiefs of major arms firms. 'We are very much interested in developing and strengthening relations with India' were the words of Israeli prime minister to the media reporters at Rashtrapati Bhawan. 'It is a historic visit and I am confident it will bring the two countries closer' were the words of Indian prime minister-Atal Behari Vajpayee. A senior official in Sharon's delegation, had the audacity to declare, 'events like September 11, 2001 and the global campaign against world terrorism have created an opportunity to create a stronger ties between India, Israel and the US and also joining hands to combat terrorism in Asia, where we see a large rise in terror activity, particularly of the radical Islamic brand'¹⁰⁰. Nothing better could be expected from Sharon, a celebrated terrorist himself. He talking of combating terrorism was like a devil quoting scriptures. Again the BJP leadership was fooled when trade balance tilted heavily in favour of Israel.

During his visit to India Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon cleared the sale of the Phalcon Early Warning Radar System to India. The world's most advanced AEWCC (airborne early warning command and control) system, the Phalcon, mounted on the Russian IL-76 air craft, costs \$ 1 billion and will enable India to have mastery of the subcontinent's skies. US have already given green signal to Israel for the sale of the Phalcon to India. 'There is no major obstacle to the Phalcon deal as the US has given its approval' argued the Israeli deputy prime minister Yosef Lapid when he was on a visit to India with Ariel Sharon, Israeli prime minister in September 2003¹⁰¹

The Indian security and intelligence agencies with Shin Bet and Mossad personnel accompanied their prime minister did not show any negligence in the protection of Ariel Sharon when he was in India in September 2003. They also restricted his public exposure because of his threat perception. 'It is much higher than even Clinton's, when he visited India' were the words of a top security official¹⁰². India's recent defense ties with Israel which has given the cutting edge to India has seriously affected Pakistani missile capability as affirmed by Kamal Matanudin the retired general. Officially Pakistan went with deep concerns regarding the India's latest defense purchase from Israel¹⁰³. Major general Amos Yaron, the director general of Israel's ministry of defense accompanied by Colonel Yoash Rubin regional

director of SIBAT, the Israeli defense export organization met the chief of Air staff, Deputy Air chief, Air Marshal Raghu Rajan, Dr.V.K.Aatre, Chief of the Defense Research and Development Organization, DRDO, during his visit to India in September 2003. DRDO is the agency with which Israel will have to work with for its major defense deals with India. The Phalcon radars, Arrow missile, Barak antimissile system were the latest defense deals of India with Israel¹⁰⁴. The Israeli announcement about the imminence of the Phalcon deal and their reference to the Arrow offer apart, the Indian navy and air force have indicated a marked preference for Israeli electronic warfare systems and surveillance radars. There is considerable interest in growing defense supply relationship between the two countries.

For upgrades of IAF and naval aircraft Israel appears to be the preferred destination. Besides the MiG-27 upgrade, India is looking towards Elta of Israel for the avionics renewal of the Russian made Kamov-25 and 28 anti-submarine helicopters. The navy is already using Elta radars for its Dornier fleet, which uses ELISRA electronic warfare systems. Rafael is also interesting to offer air to ground and air-to-air missiles to IAF. With these deals Israel is emerging as the main defense supplier to India¹⁰⁵. After getting an assurance from India that it will not leak sensitive defense technology to a third

country particularly Iran, Tel Aviv has offered New Delhi partnership in the development of a state-of -the- art attack submarine. A significant new proposal made by Israel during Sharon's visit to India in September 2003 was the co-production of submarines. The two sides discussed the likelihood of partnership in producing a conventionally powered submarine. The other joint venture the two sides are pursuing is the co-production of unmanned aerial vehicles. Since 2001, India has purchased eight Searcher and four Heron UAVs from Israel for the navy while another squadron has been purchased for the IAF¹⁰⁶

Ariel Sharon during his visit to India had the meetings with Indian Prime Minister, deputy prime minister, president, defense minister, external affairs minister, finance minister and other Indian officials to discuss the bilateral relations¹⁰⁷. Military cooperation between the two states and the measures for tackling the terrorism were the main issues discussed by Ariel Sharon with his counter part and other Indian officials during his visit to India.

✓ A decade after New Delhi and Tel Aviv formally established diplomatic relations, the two countries set up a Joint defense cooperation group around end-2001. Ostensibly, this was to help India plug key gaps in its military capability and to improve its internal

security environment, but in reality it was intended to boost flagging Israeli military sales in an internationally depressed market.

Besides, the Hindu Nationalist BJP, which leads a coalition government at the centre, also considers Israel its 'natural ally' and strategic partner, 'wholly dependable' in times of conflict. 'Russia delivers the hardware—tanks, aircraft and ships—and Israel provides the smaller weapon systems, the radar, the electronic control systems and other high-tech addons' were the words of an Indian military official¹⁰⁸.

✓ Many delegations from India and Israel visited each other's country to boost the Indo-Israeli military relations. The recent delegation headed by The Israeli premier Ariel Sharon visited India in September 2003 also concluded some agreements in the military field. Ariel Sharon was the first Prime minister of Israel who tripped India in September 2003. Regarding his trip many raised some questions as to whom the trip was productive. It was more beneficial to the Israeli arms dealers who visited India with Sharon. Currently half of the Israel's total military sales of \$4.2 billion are purchased by India. Before Ariel Sharon's arrival to India the Indian cabinet committee on security had approved a huge sum of \$97 million worth Israel's electronic warfare systems for ships¹⁰⁹.

The Indian budget, therefore, subsidizes the Israeli arms infrastructure and in effect the atrocities of the Israeli defense force. Even two generally conservative Indian analysts concur that the Indian military does not gain immensely from the arms deal. Uday Bhaskar of the Institute for Defense studies and Analysis, New Delhi noted regarding the arms deals as, 'Israel is not doing us any favors. They drive a hard bargain'. Brahma Chellaney of the centre for policy research, New Delhi, stated regarding the relationship as, 'It's a patron-client relationship rather than a relationship of equals'¹¹⁰.

The context for this visit is very significant¹¹¹. For one, both countries are now ruled by coalition governments dominated by the hard right, the BJP in one and Likud in the other, while behind the curtain US state policy has been hijacked by a core of neo-conservatives who are far more reactionary than any previous ruling clique in Washington.

Second, the general tenor of the Global War on Terror has shifted conflict resolution from rational discussion into the use of force. The US invasion of Afghanistan, the occupation of Iraq, the renewal of plan Colombia, the insertion of troops into the Philippines, and the aggression on the Korean peninsula create a climate of legitimacy for Sharon's incursions into the Palestinian Authority territory or for Advani's dream of 'hot pursuit' into Pakistan.

Thirdly, the visit had perhaps more to do with the US's Global War on Terror, GWOT, and of the Pentagon's plans for the world than it did with the lives of ordinary Indians or Israelis. Prime Minister Vajpayee did not announce it in Parliament, nor did Ariel Sharon do so in the Knesset. Brajesh Mishra announced the visit in Washington, at a 'tribute to US allies', where he hoped for the creation of some kind of core alliance or triad¹¹². Sharon had intended to spend the second anniversary of 9/11 in Delhi, a day that now signals not only the suicide attacks, but also importantly fealty to the Bush-Pentagon interests and the manipulation of every conflict into an anti-Muslim campaign. The US continues to occupy Iraq, to label any act of resistance as terrorist and to finagle states such as India to send in troops to offer target practice for an enraged citizenry. US, state department spokesman, Richard Boucher stated regarding the visit of Ariel Sharon to India as, 'we are always glad when our friends make friends with each other and work together'¹¹³. Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Yosef Lapid stated the Indian Council of World Affairs during the visit as, 'There is a mutual interest between the three countries in making the world a more secure place for all of us. There is American support for development of this unwritten axis'. While there is no 'formal triangular agreement', an axis had emerged 'in an abstract sense and even the US department of state has been hoping

that Indo-Israeli relations flourish'¹¹⁴. The BJP led government in India and the Likud-led governments preen and look forward not only to more mutual participation, but also to the growth of a formal US-Israel- India entente against terror.

Sharon, Advani and Bush, the three faces of the new alliance, are eager to profit by the tragedy of the various suicide attacks, to bolster the global right and to ensure that their model of security by the fist becomes the common sense of the planet. These are the 'Strategic delusions'¹¹⁵.

The official visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon underlines the shift in India's West Asia policy, which is bound to erode further the country's standing in the Arab World. It was the Indian security advisor Mr. Brajesh Mishra who talked much about the bogey of terrorism and US-Israel -India triad to combat this bogey during a visit to Washington in 2003. External affairs minister Jaswant Singh and Home Minister L.K.Advani also had articulated the views similar to those of Mishra during their visits to Israel. Jaswant Singh went to the extent of saying that it was 'vote bank policies' which prevented the two countries from becoming natural allies¹¹⁶.

Jaswant Singh has probably forgotten that India's relations with the Arab World was neither a policy of vote bank nor to appease the

Arab countries and the Muslim minority in India but a policy which was based on the broad principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, non-alignment, anti-Zionism and justice.

— The international community has been closely observing the growing defense and strategic cooperation between India and Israel, especially since the BJP-led government assumed office. In the last 4-5 years, Israel has emerged as the second biggest supplier of arms to India. It is doing more than a billion dollars of business annually. Indian officials say that they are particularly obliged to Tel Aviv for rushing in urgently needed military equipment during the Kargil conflict. They claim that Israel is a reliable supplier though the prices it charges are exorbitant, even by the standards of the international arms bazaar. Israel has in the last couple of years provided the Indian armed forces with sophisticated radar and border monitoring systems¹¹⁷.

The opposition parties have protested strongly against the Indian government's decision to invite Sharon. In a joint statement the leaders of the Communist party of India(Marxist), the Communist party of India, the Rashtriya Janta Dal, The Janta Dal(secular), the Samajwadi party and others described the invitation of the Vajpayee government to Sharon as 'a most unfortunate decision'. The statement also remarked that to have such a person as an honoured guest is an

insult to India's longstanding tradition of unequivocal support to the struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation and an independent state. Others remarked the India-Israel alliance as against the national interest¹¹⁸.

Arab Response Towards Indo-Israel Military Cooperation:

The growing strategic ties between India and Israel and their cooperation in the nuclear field have created serious concerns in the Arab World with the Indo-Israeli strategic collaboration gaining momentum in recent years; Arab leaders are becoming more vocal and critical of it¹¹⁹. However the Arabs are positive towards the Indo-Israeli economic cooperation. On August 24, 1999 the Arab League for the first time has alleged that both India and Israel have 'military and nuclear cooperation' and warned against the consequences for the Arab world. Suspicions, about the ties were further reinforced after India's Pokhran –II nuclear tests in May 1998. It was propagated that India and Israel clandestinely worked to develop India's nuclear weaponry. The deputy secretary general of the Arab League, Mohammad Zakaria Ismail went to the extent of alleging that the 'Organization has evidence to prove it'. Arab diplomats further alleged that Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam, the chief of the Defense Research and Development Organization visited Israel thrice in 1996-97 .Indian officials ,however, maintained that Dr.Kalam visited Israel only once

and rejected the allegation as 'baseless' and contradicted the Pakistani charges that India has acquired nuclear technology from Israel with *the intention to destroy Pakistan's nuclear capabilities*. Arab countries are worried about the growing defense cooperation between India and Israel and some Arab diplomats felt that Israel was trying to make an all-out bid to get lucrative defense projects by playing on India's security concerns and threat perceptions. The Arab countries feel that the defense ties between India and Israel would have an adverse impact on the region and jeopardize peace and security¹²⁰.

During his visit to Israel in May 2000, Indian home minister L.K.Advani assessed the prospects of Indo-Israeli nuclear cooperation positively: 'I support the expanded cooperation between India and Israel in all field including nuclear field'. This further increased Arab apprehensions. There were strong protests from the Arab Capitals against Advani's comment. The pro-Arab lobby in Delhi became active and demanded an explanation from the government. Some reports revealed that an Arab ambassador in Delhi went to the extent of openly warning India of the 'unpleasant consequences' of its new friendship with Israel¹²¹.

An Arab diplomat viewed that the Sharon visit could have an adverse impact on Indian diplomacy in the Arab world. 'This visit will be construed as an anti-Muslim and anti- Arab'. Another

diplomat from the West Asia stated that it is not merely a question of India and Israel having good relations. 'India has a role to strengthen peace, security and human rights. Israel should at least implement the road map for peace. By receiving Sharon, India is now encouraging Israel in its aggressive policies and human rights violations', said the diplomat. He said that during the presence of the Palestinian Foreign Minister in New Delhi, India should have sent a strong message to Israel that it wanted peace and an end to bloodshed in West Asia¹²².

When Yasser Arafat was asked to comment on the recent visit of Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon to India, he stated that Mr. Sharon can only escalate the situation and war between Pakistan and India¹²³.

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Chapter-4

*Indo-Israel Trade,
Agricultural, Cultural, Science
and Technological Cooperation*

In the past, that is, prior to diplomatic relations, there were limited points of contact between India and Israel. But after developing diplomatic ties, trade relations between these two countries have been growing¹. Soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states in January 1992, the Consulate in Bombay was made Consulate General. In addition, there was also an honorary Consulate in Calcutta. Since 1992 various agreements have been signed between India and Israel. Prior to 1992 there was little direct trade between India and Israel. However, trade in diamonds was carried through Indian merchants in Israel².

Moreover, India had brisk economic relations with the Arab world, which dates back to the ancient times. In those times, India with exportable surplus of resources like coffee, tea, spices and other consumer goods had been a centre of big competitive market to the West and to the Arab World. India's trade relations are not only confined to the consumer and commodity products but also entered potential fields like engineering goods, gems, jewellery, chemicals and so on, which has widened the scope for trade. Further, India depended much on the Arab world for its oil consumption. This indicates that Indo-Arab trade relation is a complementary and not competitive one³. This emerging trade relationship and mutual economic dependency led to the increasing economic and technological cooperation between

India and the Arab World in the subsequent periods. During the later years, it turned out to be a fact that India's main imports from the Arab states consisted of oil, cotton, phosphate and dates, where the Arab states have alternative and easy source of supply of tea, textile, jute and light engineering goods, India's alternative of oil, cotton, phosphate are too far away to be commercially advantageous to her⁴.

Actually, the oil factor and the Indian manpower in the Gulf region influenced the economic relationship further. Some believed that these strategic and economic factors have largely conditioned India's West Asia policy in a bigger way. The same view was substantiated by M.C.Chagla, as "Even our material interest dictated the very same policy which we were preserving. There was a large volume of trade between India and Arab countries and this would be jeopardized if we adopt a pro-Israeli policy"⁵.

Because of the tremendous trade relationship between India and the Arab States, the state of Israel remained off from the policy priorities of India in the region for a long run. But by 1990's some events in the world changed the very character of global politics. It also brought technological progress and shifted traditional approaches to economic policies. Further, the end of the Cold war has unleashed a wave of global political integration and the Marrakesh Agreement of 1994 changed the rules of the global trade⁶. This changed scenario

probably brought both India and Israel closer to each other which resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two States in 1992. But the low level of diplomatic relations was a deterrent for the development in trade. According to the Israeli Consul General Giora Becher:⁷

the official Indian policy on trade with Israel is still preventing the public sector from dealing with us even if it means spending more money or buying less quality products else where. Further more, although there is no restriction what so ever on the private sector to do business with Israel, the political atmosphere prevailing between the two countries makes many Indian businessmen believe it is better not to be engaged in many commercial contacts with their Israeli counterparts

By the early 1990 all this started changing. Around the time that India and Israel established the diplomatic relations, India globalized its economy and opened its doors to economic cooperation with the West and the rest of the world. Subsequently, there was a government-to-government interaction between the two states which led in forging of a framework for the trade and economic cooperation. In May 1993, the two States signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, and this followed by the signing of an agreement on such cooperation in

December 1994. This agreement came into action from August 28, 1995. This agreement grants the Most Favoured Nation, MFN, status to both the countries and allowed for import of Indian goods to Israel without import permits, except where such permits are required, from all countries under Israeli custom regulations⁸.

The agreement on customs cooperation was signed in January 1996. Under the standards of cooperation M.O.U, the Standards Institution of Israel (SII) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) have agreed to cooperate in testing of the quality of goods in both the countries. The Industrial Research and Development cooperation MOU envisaged the setting up of a fund to finance Research and Development projects in the private sector, which cover the developments of products and applications of commercial use⁹. The final draft of the agreement was initiated in January 1996, besides this, the agreements on double taxation and bilateral investments were also signed in January 1996. These agreements have smoothened the frame work for trade and economic cooperation between the two states. The double taxation treaty signed by both the countries widened the business relationship between the two markets¹⁰. Despite of imposing new taxes, this treaty ensured that an entity conducting business in the other country will not be exposed to double taxation on the same income both in the country of origin and in the country of residence.

As a result of this facilitation, the trade volume between the two countries has risen by an average of 50% every year from 1992 to 1996. Steadily from \$186 million in 1992 to \$386 million in 1995 and from \$456 million in 1996 it reached to \$1004 million in 1999¹¹ (see also Table No. 1). This was five times the level of trade in 1992. Amiram Halevy, the Israeli counselor for Economic Affairs remarked that, “it was something unexpected”. He further said, “A level of one billion \$ bilateral trade was targeted only for the year 2000, but in reality it turned out to be better than expectation”¹². But in 2000 the bilateral trade reached to \$1009 million. However it declined to \$ 857 million in 2001¹³. The trade between the two states is almost limited to two major items in both sides. That is, rough diamonds and chemicals together form about 63% of Israel’s export to India. While as the polished diamonds and cotton yarn account for approximately 76% of Indian exports to Israel¹⁴.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two states, many delegates from both the countries visited each other for exploring the market opportunities. The delegates from Israel included Ministers of External Affairs, Finance, Industry, Trade, Telecom, Agriculture and various other dignitaries from different firms and associations¹⁵. But the recent visit of Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon to India in September 2003 is considered very important as he was the

first Israeli Prime Minister who visited India since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Six bilateral agreements in different fields have been signed during his visit¹⁶. From the Indian side, the high level delegation included Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture and chief Ministers of various states. These visits have led to the signing of a series of bilateral agreements between the two governments¹⁷. The outcome of these exchanges of visits by the delegations of both the countries was the increased cooperation and Joint Ventures in industries and trade. Israelis believe that the Joint ventures could be the best way of doing business with India¹⁸.

Joint Ventures: }

Joint venture is an area where both the countries find common areas of cooperation. Ofri, the Israeli Economic Counselor stated:¹⁹

The best way to promote trade between India and Israel is through joint ventures, as India has a well trained workforce of dedicated engineers and scientists as well as technology minded companies. While Israel has good connection with the US and Europe, India has direct access to Asia and the third world

In this context, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. And Solel of Israel has jointly set up a solar power plant at accost of Rs. 4 billion in

Rajasthan²⁰. The first ever Indo-Israel joint venture was made between Plastro Gvat and Indian company—Finolex in February 1992 in the field of Drip irrigation²¹. Also, a phosphate plant has been setup with joint collaboration of the Gujarat industrial cooperation and Titegarh Steel mills with Rolem fertilizers of Israel²². Some other Israeli companies which have agreed for the joint venture were: Amcor and solar (solar energy), Rahan (tissue culture), Tahal (water management), Gadot (citric acid), Zinkal (irrigation pipes), Netafim (drip irrigation), Dan (irrigation) and others²³.

Both the countries also have signed an agreement on the establishment of a Joint Business council. In late 1992, a high power delegation of Manufacture's Association of Israel visited India in a bid to explore markets for their products. However, the first industrial mission to Israel was led by Jamshed Irani, the president of the Chamber of Indian industry in September 1992. This was initiated by a mutual programme in Joint ventures, trade agreements and mutually beneficial export and import programmes²⁴. And as part of it CII signed on MOU with Manufactures Association in September 1992. It has been assumed that Israel's access with the US and EEC could be converted for better market access to Indian goods. Likewise, India's links with South East Asian countries could be utilized for Israel's access to the region.

After the establishment of ambassadorial relations in 1992 a brisk and probably never ending traffic at the highest level has been going on not just at the government level but also at the level of private industrialists and businessmen. A number of projects in electronics, computer and agricultural sectors are operating under Israeli experts. The active development of Indo-Israeli economic cooperation within the short time is an amazing phenomenon. The India-Israel Business Alliance formed in October 1996 to promote the business industry and trade has a dynamic impact on cooperate sectors. To continue the momentum of the bilateral trade between the two countries commerce Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley visited with a high-level delegation to Tel Aviv recently in January 2004 to attend the third session of the India-Israel Joint trade and economic Committee.²⁵

Indian companies also have shown their keen interest in doing business with the Israeli counterpart. The Confederation of Indian Industry CII, organized a seminar on “Indo-Israeli Business Opportunities” on 15 April 1993. The Manufacture’s Association of Israel MAI, was represented by it’s the then president, Mr. Dov Lautman. In his presentation, he underlined the advantageous position of both India and Israel in trading with each other. While the India can provide Israel cheap labor, both skilled and unskilled, Israel can provide India with advanced technology. More over, the absence of

language barrier will also help trade and make its future prospect brighter²⁶.

During 1999, a series of high-level contacts between the Information Technology Associations of India and Israel were initiated in order to exploit the competitive advantages the two countries possessed in the fast growing field. The electronics and computer software export promotion council EPC and Electronic Industrial Association of Israel have signed an MOU. Also, National Association of Software and Services Companies NASSCOM, signed an agreement for closer cooperation with their counterparts, Israeli association of soft ware houses, IASH. Above all, a major development in 1999 was the finalization of the details of an agreement for Joint Research and Development between D.S.I.R and the chief scientist of Israel. They together moved for an area of cooperation between the two states in the area of Bio-technology, Life science technology, Pharmaceuticals, Agricultural food technology, Scientific and Medical instrumentations, Electronics, Automation, Aero space and Environment²⁷.

Besides, the 14th International Agricultural Exhibition, Agritech-99 was held at Haifa from September 5 -9, 1999. This was attended by a large number of visitors from India. During the same period, two delegations of small Business Authority of Israel and Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce made direct talks with their

Counterparts in India. Because of these developments, India Trade Promotion Organization ITPO, held a first ever India week in Tel Aviv in May 2000 to project the Indian Industrial strength and business opportunities to the Israel Market²⁸. Over hundred leading Indian companies participated in the India week programe, which turned out to be a milestone in the trade relations between the two countries²⁹.

Many delegations from India and Israel visited each other's country in order to increase awareness and to explore the economic ties. Notable visitors from Israel were the ministers of External Affairs, Industry and Trade, agricultural and the delegations from the Manufacturers Association of Israel, Federation of Israeli Chamber of Commerce, Electronics Association of Israel as well as several top raking Companies³⁰. However the recent visit of Israeli Premier, Ariel Sharon with his delegation to India in September 2003 is considered as the most important one from the Israeli side. During his stay both the countries signed six agreements in different fields³¹. Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, and the many State Chief Ministers and the representatives of various Industrial Associations have been visited to Israel from the Indian side. During these visits, a number of bilateral agreements were signed between the two governments³². But the visits of the Indian Home Minister Mr. Lal Krishna Advani followed by the visit of the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr.

Jaswant Singh to Israel in 2000 are considered the most important visits from the Indian side so far³³.

Cooperation in Tourism and Culture:

After the commencement of diplomatic relations, the number of Indian tourists to Israel and Israeli tourists to India increased considerably. This was mainly due to the historical and other cultural peculiarities of the two states. One of the Israeli ambassadors to India expressed his words:³⁴

Every corner in Israel is history...Israel is great centre of attraction of tourists. The major centres are Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the Sea of Galilee and so on. Another is Kibbutz, which is the only communist society. There are minor collective farming communities in which a member does not have property but works according to What Marx said—according to his ability and according to his needs. It is a unique phenomenon.

In the early 1992, soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations 3000 to 4000 visas had been issued to Indian citizens to visit Israel. This included pilgrims, businessmen, tourists and those visiting their relatives³⁵. Similarly, the Israelis are also fascinated by the Indian tradition, culture and civilizations. This is evident from the

number of visitors who visited India. By 1993, i.e. after the establishment of the ambassadorial relations between the two states 50,000 Israelis visited India ³⁶. In 2000, their number reached approximately to one lakh³⁷

When Shimon Peres visited India in May 1993 Agreements in Tourism and culture were signed between the two states ³⁸. The agreement on tourism envisaged for mutual promotion and publicity. It also undertakes to take measures for simplifying the formalities required for trips. Shimon Peres visited India with a large number of Israeli industrialists and businessmen. This was significant because it showed that Israel was earnestly interested in India and in doing business with India ³⁹. Peres believed that India and Israel could set up joint ventures in many fields where Israel had a strong scientific research base ⁴⁰. According to him Israel was more than eager to extend its cooperation to India in the technological and agricultural fields ⁴¹.

When Peres visited India, the Arab League issued a statement in Delhi and appealed India government to use its influence with Israel to make it stop its policy of economic siege and starvation in the occupied territories. The left parties and the Janta Dal also urged the government to make full bilateral ties with Israel conditional on Tel Aviv's recognition of an Independent Palestinian State. The BJP was in a celebratory mood from the very outset, characterizing the Peres visit as

a vindication of its foreign policy platform. Peres evidently reciprocated the BJP's feeling and became the first visiting dignitary after a long time to meet the leader of the opposition, L.K.Advani. In fact, Peres was the first important foreign leader to meet the BJP leader after the demolition of the Babri Masjid ⁴².

Tourism has become a common spot for people to people contact. Though tourists as such do not flow heavily to Israel, the visitors consist mainly pilgrims visiting to the holy city of Jerusalem. In August 1997 the government of India opened its Tourist office at Tel Aviv to encourage bilateral tourism ⁴³. As, such bilateral tourism is supposed to flourish in the specific context of cultural contacts between the two societies.

Actually, the cultural cooperation between the two societies dates back to the very emergence of both the states. In their days of persecution some of the Jews found shelter in India. The cultural and the tradition of India protected their identity and promoted their well-being. The absence of diplomatic relationship was not at all a hurdle for closer cultural interaction between the two societies. Hence, Jewish are fascinated to India and its culture. This could be seen in Israel that some of the Streets in Israel are named after Tagore and Gandhi. India's appreciation for Jewish artists was open in 1960's as the famous Jewish Violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, was chosen to receive the

Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International understanding in 1968⁴⁴. The Israeli Consulate, after its establishment in Bombay has initiated variety of cultural programmes to catch up with the trend. This included symposia, debates, lectures, exhibition and literary events. By this time, the veterans from both the societies have traveled to each other's capital.

In 1993, India and Israel signed a cultural agreement and a framework programme for cultural cooperation for the period of 1993-1996. The agreements for the exchange of Scholars between Tel Aviv University and Banaras Hindu University, The Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities and University Grants Commission and Barllan University and Hyderabad University were made in June 1994⁴⁵. As per the same Israel agreed to seven scholarships annually to students from India for Post-Graduate and Post-doctoral studies. The scholarships cover West Asian and International studies, Jewish culture, Hebraic studies and Agriculture⁴⁶. As part of the academic exchange programe, the Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis IDSA organized an annual seminar with the Jaffe Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. More over, during the visit of Israeli Minister for Education, A R Ubinstein, in January 1996, a proposal for the establishment of a chair in Hebrew Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University has been proposed and agreed upon.

Inspite of these academic collaborations, there was fast growing Cultural exchanges between the two societies. Leading cultural performers and groups have traveled between Delhi and Jerusalem, Mumbai and Tel Aviv and performed in front of packed houses. These visits have touched nearly every sphere of culture, music, dance, art, literature and so on.

The major highlights of these activities included some cultural festivals organized in both the countries. This included the visit of Zubin Mehta to Israel and the Israel Philanthropic orchestra to India in 1994 and the participation of Zakir Hussain in the 1996 Israel festival in Jerusalem ⁴⁷. The other important cultural exchanges included The Gathering 1995, the screening of films and discussion with film director, Arnon Zodak in 1997, Israel's participation in the Delhi International Book Fair, 1996 and Shalom India events ⁴⁸.

Similarly, India's representation in Israel included the annual Indian participation in the Jerusalem Film Festival, and Vikram Seth's visit to Jerusalem poet festival in 1997. This also included the Publication of the Hebrew translation of 'A Suitable Boy' and Mallika Sarabhai's dancing programme. During March 1998, in response to the visit of a 33 member Israeli dance group to India, a 6 member Bharatnatyam troop led by Alamel Valli visited Israel⁴⁹.

In addition to this, the bilateral scholarship programmes allow young Israelis to learn about Dance, Music and Sanskrit in India. Equally, a large number of Indian students visit Israel to study about West Asia, the Hebrew language, Literature and Agriculture. In this context, the cultural treaty, signed in 1993 meant the exchange of mutual support for sharing the two cultures within the framework of the treaty. Two detailed cultural exchange programmes CEP have also been signed and implemented. The second C.E.P was also signed during the visit of President Ezer Weizman in late December 1996. This included future plans for a further increase of exchanges between museums, more academic interaction and mutual participation in Golden Jubilee Celebrations in 1997 and 1998⁵⁰. The joint committee for C.E.P met again in early 2000 and signed a new cooperation plan for the year 2000-2002⁵¹.

✓ Again in 1997, Israeli embassy organized the Shalom India Festival, a month long celebration to mark India's 50th anniversary and five years of diplomatic relations. The festival included a fashion show, a dance performance, a food festival and film shows. In 1998 also, Israel's leading theatre actress and film actress, Gila Almagor visited India. Later, in the same year, a leading Jazz quintet from Israel collaborated with Ustad Zakir Hussain to produce a joint performance in Delhi. In 1999 also, the Embassy organized a festival to celebrate

Israel's 50th anniversary. The festival featured the diversity of Israel's culture. This was held in eight states; from Orissa in the East to Gujarat in the West, from Tamil Nadu in the South to Rajasthan in the North. Another joint project was a workshop on Israel by two prominent artists—Menashe Kadishman of Israel and Jalin Das of India⁵².

Finally, with the opening of an Israeli Cultural Centre in New Delhi, a new chapter was added to the already initiated cultural exchange programmes and schemes. This included Hebrew classes, lectures, film shows, cultural discussions and expansion of the Department of East Asian studies at Tel Aviv University to include a track in Indian and Sanskrit studies⁵³. It was also envisaged to plan similar programmes at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

These varying cultural programmes have attained its own novelty and wisdom that the CEP was accepted by many in both the countries. This and the like programmes facilitated the students, artists of both the societies to actively learn about the features of their respective cultures and traditions.

Agricultural Cooperation:

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the cooperation in the Agricultural sector has turned out to be a solid and unique one. So far, a number of Joint venture Agricultural projects were initiated in India. This was mainly in the fields of irrigation, water management, fertilizers, greenhouses, chemicals, pesticides, insecticides, tissue culture, horticulture, use of solar energy, animal husbandry, dairy development and so on. Israel's know-how in agriculture, pertaining to these areas and power and food industries were also included in the Joint venture projects ⁵⁴.

Actually, in short history of bilateral relations between the two countries, cooperation in Agricultural sector, is one of the best exploited and explored one by the two parties. By the signing of an agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture, in December 1993, it assumed unique dimensions. The agreement was signed between Balram Jhakar, the then Indian Agriculture Minister and his counterpart Yaakov Tour. Also they held wide ranging discussions on promoting bilateral cooperation in this sector⁵⁵. Both the states have agreed that the application of the technology in India would also lead to the solution of the intractable problems of water logging and soil alkalinity. This technology could be successfully applied in

confronting deserts in Rajasthan and Gujarat and in increasing agricultural productivity in the semi-arid areas of Maharashtra⁵⁶.

Israel has utilized its marginal water resources to make the desert bloom. Its strides in horticulture, aquaculture and floriculture and arid-zone farming hold applications for India. Indians hope to use Israeli expertise to do the same in Rajasthan and other semi-arid states⁵⁷. Earlier, Tel Aviv had organized an Agro-Tech exhibition in May 1993. Maharashtra the then Chief minister Shard Pawar led a six member delegation to the exhibition in Israel. The delegation included Union Agriculture Secretary M.S.Gill and Punjab Minister for cooperation and others. About 600 farmers from Maharashtra and more about 300 more from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana were also there. The exhibition had generated great interest in the Indian farming community. The delegation had acquired and familiarized themselves with the technologies for optimum water use and productivity⁵⁸.

Subsequently, several proposals for joint ventures especially in the areas of seed production and manufacture of agricultural/manufacturing machinery have been formulated pilot-projects and turnkey projects have also been identified for promoting Indo-Israeli cooperation in the Agricultural sector. Besides, a traveling seminar was also organized jointly by the Israeli and Indian experts and arranged a

visit to Indra Gandhi Canal and desert areas of Rajasthan. It was hoped that the same would help in evolving appropriate water management and micro-planning in these areas.

In this context, the planned development of linkages between Ben-Gurion Desert University of Negev and an Indian Academic and Research Institute such as Rajasthan Agricultural University was envisaged to promote the scientists of the two countries in an exchange of ideas in the fields of desert stabilization, water management, and poly-green house technology and so on. India was very much optimistic in exploring the cooperation in this sector. She felt satisfied that the industry level collaboration were being underway for manufacture of drip-irrigation system, tissue culture, hybrid seed production and manufacture of farm machinery. Further, an MOU to stabilize cooperation in this sector was also finalized⁵⁹.

Israel was also ready to share their technology to the demands from India. A five day visit to India by the then Israeli president, Ezer Weizman in December 1996 opened a new chapter in Indo-Israeli cooperation. His visit was the first ever visit to India by the head of the state of Israel. Visualizing the future role of India he stated, “the 21st century belongs to East- China, Japan, Indonesia and India will take its place in the technology world”⁶⁰. Regarding the cooperation between India and Israel, he argued, “we will help each other, not teach each

other”⁶¹. During his visit to India four bilateral agreements were signed between the two countries ⁶². President Weizman who was leading the delegation of the Israeli businessmen who came to India in December 1996 offered his country as a base for re-exporting Indian goods to the US, Europe and other countries with which Israel has close political and economic links. Israel has free trade agreements with the Western markets, which, according to the Israeli delegation, will help India to access these markets more easily. It may be noted that Israeli Economy would also get an outlet to the rich markets of East and South East Asia through India ⁶³. During President Weizman’s visit in December 1996, an Indo-Israeli Research and Development Farm were inaugurated in the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, IARI at Pusa in New Delhi ⁶⁴. The farm would demonstrate the Israeli know-how in high-tech agriculture and would endeavour to find different techniques and methods of cultivation suitable for the diverse agro-climatic zones of India ⁶⁵. The demonstration farm in Pusa institute is a joint venture undertaken by the government of Israel and India. The farm is operating since November 1999. Within this farm, through training programmes local farmers are given instructions on various effective measures of crop growing as well as water conservation to increase the growth yield. The purpose of the farm is to demonstrate the cultivation of different kinds of crops, through the use of sophisticated irrigation

technology and methods of crop protection, two fields in which Israel has special expertise. The farm serves as a centre for training in various aspects related to the farm technologies, management and so on. The farm grows some kinds of crops, vegetables and flowers⁶⁶.

Also, during the same visit, a cotton demonstration farm in Alkola in Maharashtra was established in collaboration with the state government and agriculture development company, AGRIDEV, in Israel. Further, a series of projects with many state governments in India have been initiated. This included the projects between the Punjab Agro-Industries cooperation and Ozcot Company of Israel and the Indo-Israel demonstration farm in the field of dairy development in Karnal. Besides, the proposal for setting up a hundred cows' dairy farm by Israeli design, the Israeli Dairy Board and Punjab government signed an MOU to establish the modern satellite dairy farm in Punjab⁶⁷.

✓ Tahal, the Israeli water management company is engaged in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu for waste land development, irrigation and water and modern agricultural pilot projects. Israeli company in the field of agriculture has provided turn-key projects for the establishment of tissue culture laboratories in India. Way back in 1997, an executive agreement was signed between the two nations for future progrme of action in this sector. This also included the programmes for establishment of green houses, open field facilities,

infra structure and technical assistance, training and management for specific periods ⁶⁸. A steering Committee was also constituted comprising experts from both the countries to monitor the entire programmes. It was also decided to provide twenty-five training scholarships for participants from India, particularly in the fields of irrigation, protected agriculture and horticultural production.

Thus, the collaboration in agriculture has turned out to be one of the most attractive and explored one by both the states since the commencement of the diplomatic relations.

So far, there are some 150 joint ventures between India and Israeli companies. Most of them are in the sphere of agriculture. Israel's famous drip irrigation systems are jointly manufactured in three different locations in India. These ventures enjoy participation by Israel's leading agricultural companies. Agriculture is still the field for which Israel is best known in India, as can be witnessed in Indian participation in Agritech, Israel's triannual agricultural exposition (held last in 1996 and 1999). However, cooperation also exists in other sectors, such as telecommunications, including joint manufacturing of high speed modems, voice-mail systems and fiber optic production and software where a couple of companies have setup their offices as well as R and D centers in India⁶⁹ This indicates that both the states have

shown the interest towards the areas of common interests and mutual benefits.

Ephraim Dowek in an interview stated:⁷⁰

we have a special experience of developments which we think is nearer to the needs of developing countries like India, because it is the summing up of a new experience of the last 50 years.

Science and Technology Cooperation:

Besides agriculture, Science and technology too assumes greater dimensions in the bilateral cooperation between India and Israel. Way back in 1993, an agreement on Science and technology was signed between the two states during the visit of the then Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres. This agreement stood for direct scientific and technological cooperation between governmental agencies, academies of science, research institutes, and enterprises, institutions of higher education and scientific communities of the two states ⁷¹.

However, a detailed work plan was finalized in September 1993, identifying specific areas of cooperation namely bio-technology. Lasers, electro-optics and information technology. In November 1994, during the visit of the Israeli minister for communications and science and technology, Shulamit Aloni, the two governments installed an agreement setting up a science and technology fund with a corpus of \$

three million ⁷². This was made possible by equal share by both the governments to facilitate joint R and D projects in the areas identified for cooperation.

Subsequently, a meeting of the Joint Working group and a Seminar on advanced materials was held in July 1996 in Israel. The next meeting of the Joint Working Group and a seminar on Biotechnology was held in March 1997 in Delhi. Some research projects are underway. In 1999, another one was extended for the research on 'Human genome' ⁷³. The project found enthusiasm and interest in both the states and a series of collaborative endeavours on 'Human genome' have been initiated in 2000. The Joint Committee which met in New Delhi in 1997 agreed that four to six Indian researchers will visit Israel in 1998 for a period of four to six weeks each. So far, four such visits have been approved and undertaken. Thus, there has been an impressive representation of Israeli and Indian scholars in International Scientific conferences in both the countries and also there is a regular flow of Indian students of advanced studies to Israel ⁷⁴.

The tempo of bilateral cooperation is reflected in the Bi-national conferences that have already taken place. At first, a bi-national conference on genetics and research on human genome was organized in Israel in 1998. This conference was attended by six Indian scholars.

Second bilateral symposium on current issues of condensed matter and material physics took place in Delhi in the beginning of 1999. In this conference over twenty Israeli students participated ⁷⁵. The momentum gained in the scientific sector is reflected in the sharing of technology as well. Tahal Consulting Engineering LTd, an Israel based multinational Company, has entered an agreement with several Indian partners in the field of engineering, ground water management, desalination, agro-industries and prevention of desertification. Already, this firm has played an active role in the development of Israel's water resources, agricultural industry and infrastructure. It has signed an MOU with the state governments of Gujarat and Rajasthan for the transfer of technical know-how ⁷⁶. Likewise, Tadiran, Israel's leading electronic industry is also cooperating with India in transfer of technology and production on sharing arrangements.

An agreement has also been signed between the Indian Science Academy and Israeli National Academy of science and Humanities for providing regular cooperation and exchange in the field of science and technology. In this regard, discussions have been held regarding collaboration in the field of commercial application of solar energy, operationalisation of Indian solar energy on the lines of those in Israel, Joint R and D with the Weizman Institute in a project for direct conversion of solar energy into steam and petrochemical refining ⁷⁷.

The fourth indo-Israeli joint committee meeting on science and technology was held in Jerusalem on 3rd of November 1999. The meeting finalized four proposals for joint research projects in the area of human genome research ⁷⁸. In short, there was a very healthy bilateral relationship in almost all the areas of common interest between the two countries. On January 22, 2002 Indo-Israeli cooperation attained yet another zenith, this time in the field of electronics and information technology close on the heels of the Deputy Prime Minister Shimon pere's visit to India, communication and information technology minister of India Shri Pramod Mahajan made a three day visit to Israel with an auspicious proposal up his sleeve very earnestly, the two countries signed a MOU to promote bilateral trade in electronics and information technology, thus giving a fillip to research and development activities and technology transfer between the two countries. The memorandum was signed between Shri Mahajan and his Israeli counterpart, Mr. Reuven Rivlin, as a first step towards the establishment of a framework for cooperation between the two countries in information technology and electronics. Earlier, an agreement had been initiated in the area of telecom and posts in 1994 that came into effect from 1998. This new agreement would enhance industrial and technical competitiveness of both countries through cooperation in industrial research and development. Besides, the

memorandum would add further bytes to technology transfer potential between the two countries. One of the areas India is keen on enhancing with the applications of this cooperation is the defence sector. During Mr. Mahajan's visit to Israel in 2002 he also called upon the defense minister of Israel, Binyamin Ben- Elizer, which clearly indicated that India is very much interested to utilize the Israeli information technology techniques in its defense sector ⁷⁹.

India and Israel also have signed various agreements to cooperate in Space Research in an effort to benefit from each other's experience and form an alliance to reach out to the global market. The agreements were signed during the visit of the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization ISRO, K. Kasturirangan to Israel in August 2003. The ISRO chief also met the Israel's Science and Technology Minister, Eliezer Sandberg, and the Director of Israel Space Research, Avi Hareven and exchanged the information regarding the ongoing developments in Space Research ⁸⁰.

At the economic level, relationship between India and Israel has been showing some upward trend almost since 1992. The total bilateral trade showed some increase after the establishment of diplomatic relations. In 1991 the total trade between the two States was 129 US \$ million. However, slowly increase year by year pushed the trade to 1099 US \$ million in 2000. India's exports to Israel are mainly

precious stones and jewelry, cotton yarn, fabrics, drugs, pharmaceuticals, and so on ⁸¹. Whereas the Israeli exports to India apart from pearls, fertilizers are the military arms, which are being sold to India worth million dollars. Defense analysts estimated that Israel sold weapons to India crossed \$ 500 million during the 1997-2000 ⁸². By 2001, India had signed weapons contracts worth \$ 2 billion with Israel⁸³. Recently the Israeli Cabinet headed by Ariel Sharon has approved the sale of Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems worth US \$ 1.1 million⁸⁴. It is clear from the above estimations that India is providing the market to Israel for selling her arms worth million US dollars to India. From the above estimation, one can easily analyze that India is being treated by Israeli arms exporters as conducive market, which could be exploited by them even if they sold their hardware at exorbitant price. Indo-Israel arms trade is unilateral. Arms from Israel to India. Only the pretext is combating terrorism and fundamentalism. This is high time top echelons in the government realize and save the poor Indian taxpayers from misery.

On the other hand, India's relation with the Arabs dates back to many centuries. The intensive interaction among the people of Arabia and the Indian subcontinent since centuries was primarily promoted by trade, which saw the flowering of the two-way exchanges that have left

their imprint also on literature, lifestyles and the languages of the two regions⁸⁵.

India's trade relations with the Arabs are growing fast since decades. The oil, which is in abundance in the Arab World, has built these trade relations very much strong and almost still overwhelming. India is heavily dependent on this oil of Arabia. Almost the GCC countries including Iran presently account for almost all of the India's oil imports⁸⁶. Ever since OPEC became an effective cartel in 1973-74, oil has become the biggest single Indian import. Now in this age (1990's), India's security hinges critically on the oil exporting countries of the region (Arab/Gulf). Analysts point out that India can easily lose a war for its poor petroleum policies⁸⁷. It was thought that India's stakes were much higher in the region, as according to one analyst, "the Gulf is our lifeline as much as that of the West. We could be thwarted much more easily by development in this region"⁸⁸. Even though at the time of the invasion of Iraq, India had major economic stakes in both Iraq and Kuwait. India was importing crude oil from Iraq to the tune of 2.2 millions tons and 1.5 millions from Kuwait. Further, there were around 170000, Indian workers in both Iraq and Kuwait when the crisis broke out⁸⁹.

The total indo-Arab trade reached \$4463 million in 1990 and in 1991, it stood at \$4232 million. In the following year, the total

bilateral trade between Arab and India reached \$6415 million. In this year, India established the diplomatic relations with Israel but this step could not reach the trade figures of India and Arab in the same year or after that. India's trade relations with the Arabs were overwhelming not only prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel but are still increasing and overwhelming and are still higher than Israel. The Indo-Arab trade which was \$4232 million in 1991, reached \$6727 million in 1993 and the trade stood at \$10448 million in 1996, whereas it touched \$9941 million in 2000. On the other hand the Indo-Israel trade was \$129 million in 1991 and in 1993 it reached \$370 million but in 2000 it reached \$1099 million.⁹⁰ (See tables 1, 2).

From the trade figures mentioned above, it is clear that Indo-Arab trade is overwhelming than its trade with Israel. The oil, which is mainly imported from the Arabs, has increased the trade levels. This oil is playing a very much significant role in the Industrial development in India. On the other hand, the arms and ammunitions that are being imported worth of million dollars from Israel can strangle the industrial development since huge amount is being wasted on the purchase of Israeli arms and ammunitions.

Moreover above three million Indian workers are working in the Gulf States. They constitute the largest proportion of the total foreign population living in the Gulf region as whole, as well as in each of the

gulf countries, ranging from 21.5% in Kuwait to 54% in Oman, from 25.4% in Saudi Arabia to 41.1% in UAE.

It means that the Gulf is playing a significant role in minimizing the job crisis in India by providing jobs to millions of Indian workers in the region. The Indian expatriates remit some four billion dollar per annum to India⁹¹. It should be noted that Israel's recent step of recruiting Indian workers in their hotels⁹² is minimal compound to millions of Indian workers already working in the Gulf and sending remittances strengthening Indian economy.

As far as India's, trade relations with Israel one can deduce that through this relationship Israelis have gained immensely and India meagerly. While Israeli exports to India are of larger volume, the Indian exports are negligible. The trade relations between the two countries at this stage are tilted heavily to Israel's advantage at a heavy cost of Indian taxpayers money and without dividends in real terms. Moreover, the tables depict that trade volume with the Arab world is very substantial and India cannot afford to annoy the Arabs at the cost of its newfound trade relations with Israel.

Table-1: Indo-Israeli Bilateral trade (from 1990-2000), US \$ million

Year	India's Export	India's Imports	Total Bilateral Trade
1990	61	94	155
1991	64	65	129
1992	74	112	186
1993	125	245	370
1994	141	292	433
1995	185	201	386
1996	220	236	456
1997	281	325	606
1998	328	365	693
1999	414	590	1004
2000	486	613	1099
TOTAL	2379	3138	5517

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001

Table-2: India's Trade with Arab States (Mentioned in Table No. 3 & 4) From 1990-2000, US \$ million

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Imports	3391	2700	4648	4655	5379	6537	7624	8036	5002	4921	6655	59548
Exports	1072	1532	1767	2072	2190	2355	2824	2834	3062	2922	3286	25916
Total	4463	4232	6415	6727	7569	8892	10448	10870	8064	7843	9941	85464

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001.

Table-3: India's trade with Arab States (1990-2000) US \$ million (Exports)

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Bahrain	39	49	47	49	60	62	65	55	77	81	93	677
Egypt	120	81	446	476	116	138	165	208	270	245	281	2546
Jordan	23	102	62	65	60	68	79	67	64	54	58	702
Kuwait	69	52	120	97	125	131	149	163	263	259	-	1428
Lebanon	2	9	9	7	9	15	19	23	35	37	56	221
Oman	56	74	84	78	80	99	122	105	147	147	182	1174
Qatar	22	19	27	29	26	29	38	39	56	60	84	429
Saudi Arabia	249	352	431	478	442	425	521	625	750	672	834	5779
Syria	9	18	24	29	25	30	45	46	51	51	59	387
UAE	455	738	480	726	1210	1306	1491	1451	1303	1268	1585	12013
Yemen	28	38	37	38	37	52	130	52	46	48	54	560
Total	1072	1532	1767	2072	2190	2355	2824	2834	3062	2922	3286	25916

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001

Table-4: India's trade with Arab States (1990-2000), US \$ million (Imports).

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Bahrain	200	49	371	520	632	794	931	640	612	647	744	6140
Egypt	45	67	576	446	230	92	63	190	46	148	170	2073
Jordan	190	145	157	106	140	172	129	153	181	280	267	1920
Kuwait	421	215	965	1066	1386	1884	2208	2493	326	0	0	10964
Lebanon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	16	15	36
Oman	40	43	18	20	23	15	15	30	53	79	99	435
Qatar	24	36	102	118	106	98	147	84	77	76	141	1009
Saudi Arabia	1475	1109	1649	1601	1513	1860	2428	2733	1887	1872	2321	20448
Syria	0	0	1	10	22	5	21	12	8	7	8	94
UAE	964	994	727	658	1307	1594	1657	1686	1801	1787	2216	15391
Yamen	32	42	82	110	20	23	24	14	8	9	674	1038
Total	3391	2700	4648	4655	5379	6537	7624	8036	5002	4921	6655	59548

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001

Table-5: Total Import and Export Trade with some Arab Countries (Mentioned in Table No. 3 & 4) (1990-2000), US \$ million

Country	Bahrain	Egypt	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Oman	Qatar	SaudiArabia	Syria	UAE	Yemen	Total
Exports	677	2546	702	1428	221	1174	429	5779	387	12013	560	25916
Imports	6140	2073	1920	10964	36	435	1009	20448	94	15391	1038	59548
Total	6817	4619	2622	12392	257	1609	1438	26227	481	27404	1598	85464

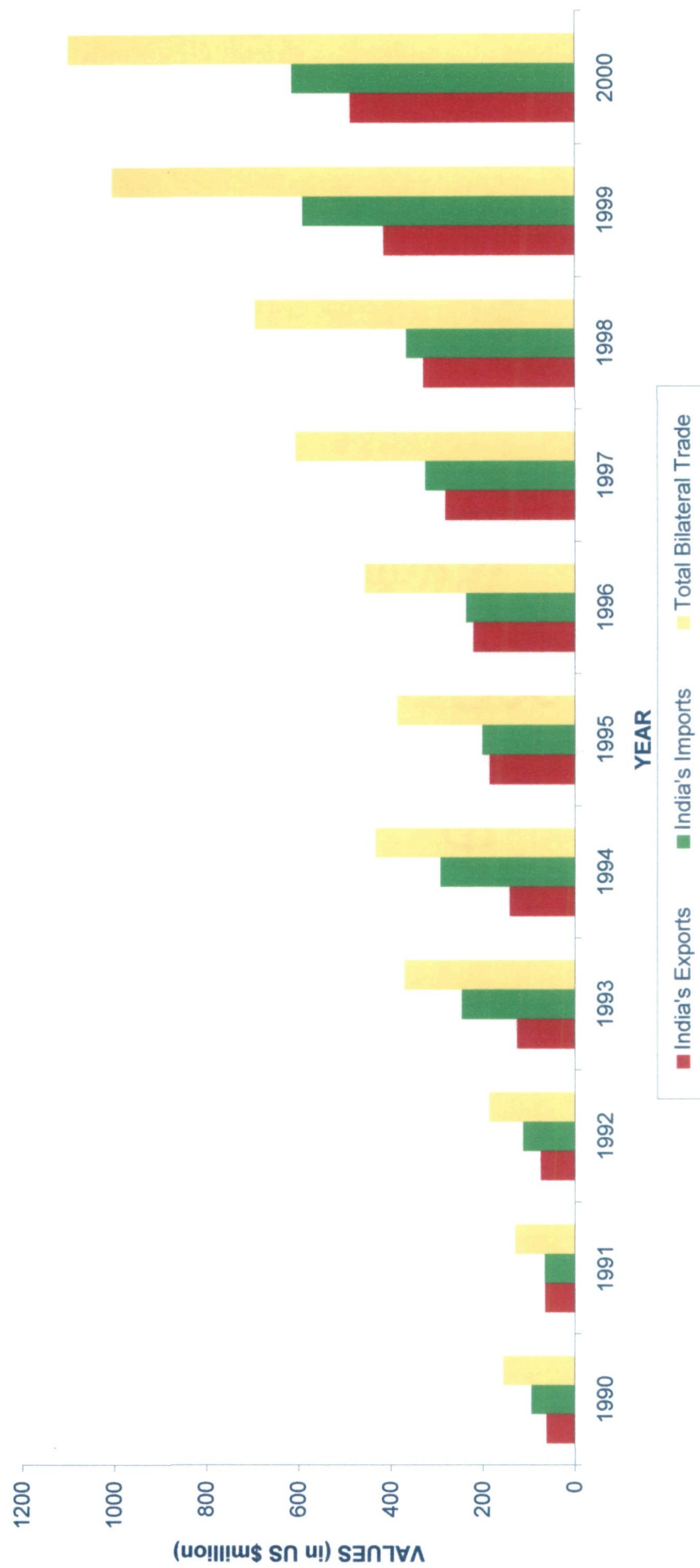
Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001

Table-6: India's Imports of Petroleum Crude and Products (1995-2000), US \$ million

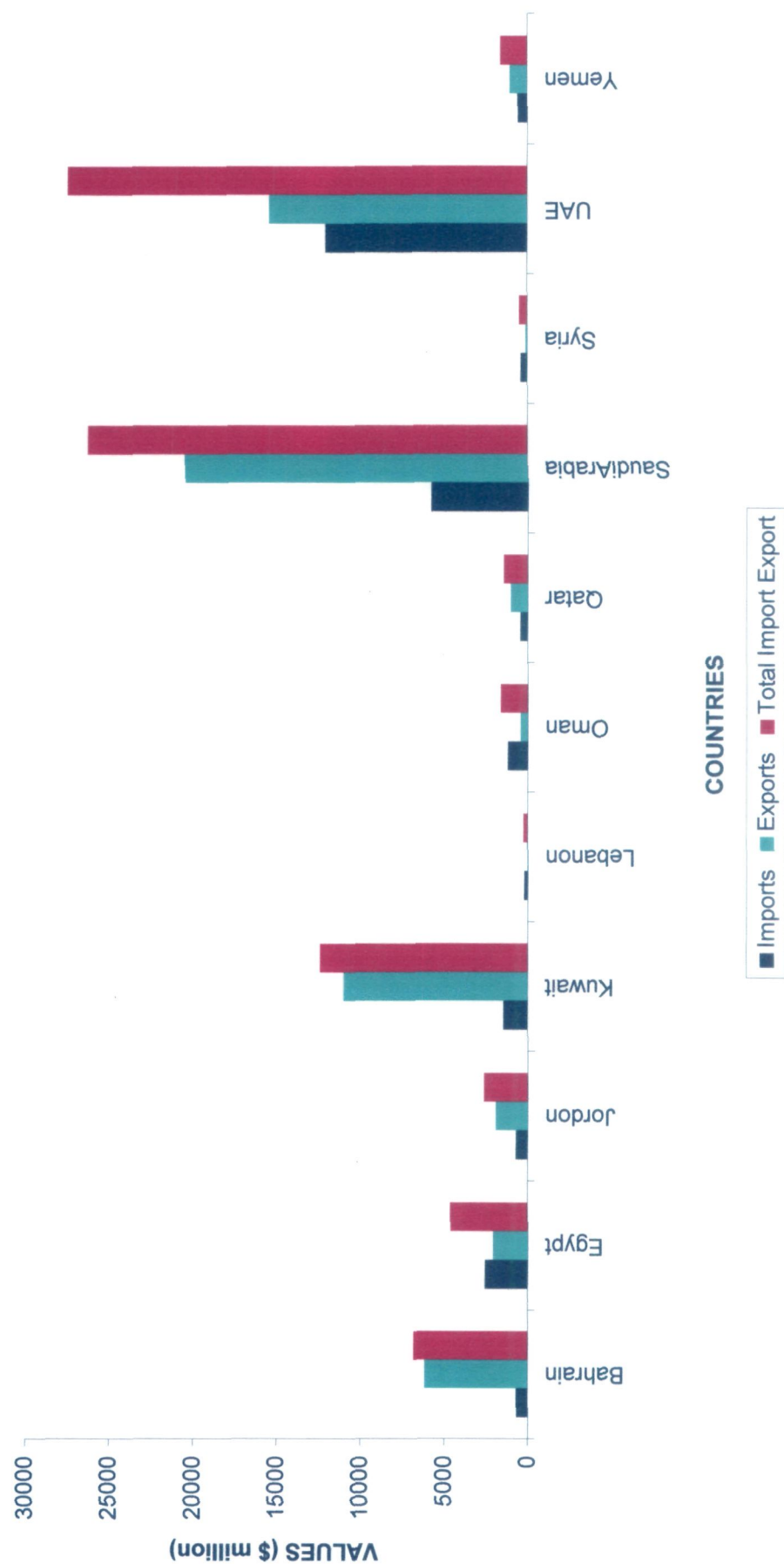
Country	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	Total
Saudi Arabia	1,539.76	2,140.93	1,769.73	1,191.81	1,691.45	8,333.68
UAE	1,050.52	1,382.73	978.69	909.90	1,633.20	5,955.04
Kuwait	1,872.38	2,276.44	2,109.66	1,334.54	1,381.70	8,974.72
Iran	433.69	677.14	429.32	256.25	781.77	2578.17
Bahrain	807.11	778.19	500.83	361.81	258.54	2706.48
Iraq	-	24.82	185.60	150.90	200.37	561.69
Yemen	17.15	12.20	10.04	1.78	6.37	47.54
Qatar	0.87	26.77	7.84	7.80	2.41	45.69
Total	5,721.48	7,319.22	5,991.71	4,214.79	5,955.81	29,203.01

Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, Cited in Girijesh Pant, "India's Energy Security: The Gulf Factor", GSP Occasional Paper Series, GSP 2002/ 03

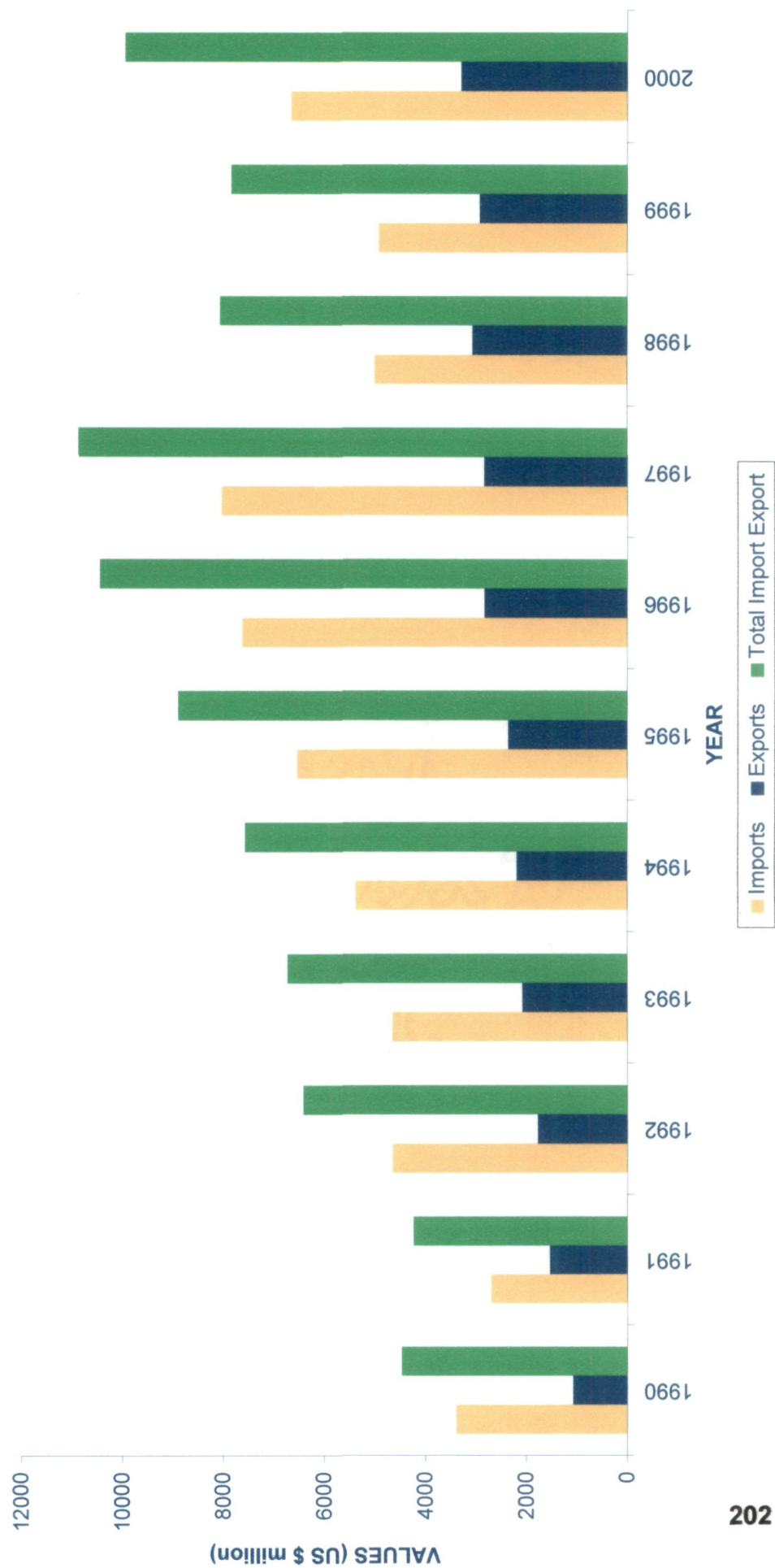
Indo-Israeli Bilateral Trade



**Total Import and Export Trade with some Arab Countries
(1990-2000) in US \$ million**



India's Trade with Arab States From 1990-2000
in US \$ million



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Chapter-5
BJP-Israel and
US Axis

The Zionists, the Jansangh and the BJP: Ideological Affinity:

The tragic partition of Palestine under the auspices of the United Nations had catapulted the Zionists as leaders of the newly created state of Israel. Soon they were busy in mustering support among those nations and leaders who had opposed the partition. India was a major State, needless to reamphasise, which had stood by the principles of liberty of the peoples all over the world. It had stood for the majority of Arabs in Palestine as against Zionist occupation of their land. Nevertheless, importance of India as a leader of the newly Afro-Asian nations was not lost to the Zionists. Earlier they had tried to win over Gandhi as well as Nehru for their own ends and they had failed miserably in this venture. With the establishment of Israel, they again renewed their efforts. However, Nehru- the architect of India's Foreign policy brushed their pleas aside. Nehru was emphatic when he was approached by Moshe shertok in 1948, 'His government had decided to defer consideration of this question'. He further stated, 'The obvious reasons were that a new state was formed and we had to wait. Normally we should have to be satisfied and know exactly that the international position before taking any step'¹.

India had friendly relations with the Arabs. She had no wish to do any thing, which might hurt the Arab feeling. However India's

recognition of Israel was announced on 17th of September 1950. The statement made by the Indian government at that time:

‘India will always value the friendship of Egypt and other Arab states’ said the press communiqué of the ministry of external affairs. A spokesman of the ministry of external affairs disclosed that ‘a memorandum has been received from the Egyptian government, urging the postponement of the recognition of Israel until, her attitude towards the Arab refugees question has been clarified. In response to this memorandum (from the government of Egypt) the Indian government iterated that:²

the recognition of Israel does not mean that there is no difference between India’s attitude and that of Israel over the questions like the status of Jerusalem and Israeli frontiers. These questions would be judged by India on merits and due regard would be given to the Arab claims.

India after its independence in 1947 was charting out its own course of action along with African and Arab Nation States who had recently thrown the yoke of imperialism. Non-alignment was the new mantra, which had brought leaders from diverse backgrounds like Marshall Tito, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Sukarno and Nehru together to pursue independent policies as against ruthless interests of the West. At this juncture, the pursuation of the Zionists for India’s support was

nothing but an anathema since Zionism and its aims were diametrically opposite to what Afro-Asian Nationalism and non-alignment stood for.

Nevertheless, there were in India, a section of people who thought otherwise. For them friendship with Arabs was merely a ploy to appease the Indian Muslims. For them the Palestinian cause was of no value. The massive trade with the Arab World and remittances India was receiving on account of millions of Indian working in the Gulf was of no consequence to them. Their heart felt desire was friendship with Israel. This had a background.

The Bharatiya Kary Samiti- a wing of Janasangh of 1948 would see the state of Israel in different light. They passed a resolution on Israel in January 1965:³.

Israel is the only really democratic country in West Asia. It is a highly developed country and has been playing an increasing important role in the economic development of newly emerging African countries with which she has developed very good relations. By developing closer relations with Israel, India would not only contribute to stability in the region but will also improve her position in a number of African states. It is therefore imperative that India must have full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Jana Sangh demands the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel. The party argues that when the USA and Russia, the UK and Yugoslavia and the countries such as Ethiopia and Ghana, Kenya can have diplomatic relations with Israel and Arab countries, it does not make any sense why India must alone insult Israel and the world Jews in a stupid bid to appease the Arabs. The party believes that India can partly checkmate Pakistani influence in the Middle East by normalizing the relations with the state of Israel. The Jana Sangh argued that Why India should side with the Arabs against Israel. 'When they (Arab countries) do not side with us against Pakistan'

The Sangh leadership was of the opinion that Jordan and Saudi Arabia have been all the time helping Pakistan who is India's enemy. India should also treat them as enemies. According to the party when the UAR, which is partially neutral, can have friendly relations with India, Pakistan and China, Why cannot India be friendly with both the UAR and Israel? And party feels that there is no reason why India should not have the closet relations with Israel. The party wants India to adopt a policy of strict reciprocity regarding Israel and Arab countries. If UAR claims to be neutral in the conflicts between India and Pakistan and India and china, then India should also become neutral in the UAR's conflict with Israel or any other country. According to the party the India should look beyond Cairo and

understand the variegated pattern of countries surrounding the Mediterranean⁴.

Jana Sangh merged into Janata party, which came into power after the defeat of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress party in the parliamentary elections of 1977. It was the first time in independent India that the congress was out of power and a coalition of opposition parties had entered the office. Although the Janata government did not complete its full term, it stuck to India's age-old foreign policy postulates. With regard to the Palestinian question, it maintained a consistent stand⁵.

Nevertheless B.J.P, which was one of the constituents, of the Janata party through its leader Vajpayee, who happened to be the foreign Minister, wanted to give a twist as far as India's relations with Israel were concerned. Speaking to India Today, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, India's external affairs minister in Desai's government, said:⁶

Differences are not that important in the field of foreign policy because it is always based on elements of continuity and change. There is bound to be some change. But we adhere strictly to the basic postulates and to national concerns because foreign policy should serve national interest.

This statement of Vajpayee can be construed as prelude to change in India's policy, which Vajpayee had always nursed, an alliance with Israel.

Though the public pronouncements did not suggest change in the Indian foreign policy. Vajpayee, a leader of the erstwhile Jan Sangh-a *right wing party that was a constituent of Janata party, was particularly critical of Indian policy with regard to West Asia. He was against the unqualified support given by India to the Arab states especially during the Arab –Israeli conflicts. He spoke for a policy based on reciprocity. He thought that the attitude of the most of the Arab states during the wars with China and Pakistan had given a severe jolt to the Indians in the 1960's. Vajpayee's attempts in arranging the visit of Moshe Dayan is a case in point. While Vajpayee wanted to upgrade the relations with Israel, Prime Minister Mr. Desai categorically refused it by saying that his government would fall if Deyan's visit became publicly known*⁷.

Therefore, when, Janata party took charge of Indian affairs, many in India and outside were quite apprehensive as to India's policy towards West Asia in general and about the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular. There was an essential continuity of the earlier foreign policy of India. India maintained its policy of backing the just stand of the Arab nations on Palestine and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to form their own nation state,

about Israel it was made clear that it should withdraw to pre-June 67 borders vacating the Arab territories. Although the right of Israel to exist was recognized, diplomatic status was not given and the status quo was maintained, as the government did not want to compromise on its earlier foreign policy principles ⁸.

Internationally, the friendship of oil producing countries was very valuable owing to India's economic concerns and requirements of oil. The need to check the allegations of Pakistan against India by labeling India as anti-Muslim continued. Thus the need for promoting India's secular image still existed. Besides, the need for support in various international forums for India's various interests could not be ignored. On the Palestinian issue the new prime minister of India Mr. Desai, expressed similar sentiments as his predecessors in office. He felt that the Arab refugees had to be settled and Israel had to withdraw from the occupied territories, which would then, be proclaimed a Palestinian state. He recognized the Israelis right to exist and its security concerns. Referring to his talks with Sadat, he said , 'I told Sadat that one could not turn the clock back, that Israel was now an established fact and that you, the Arabs, must guarantee her existence, but Israel must make possible the rise of a Palestinian state'⁹

After a couple of years of rule of Janata party, the Congress came back to rule India in 1980 and continued its old policies

regarding the West Asia and showed full support to the demand of Palestinians for the vacation of areas occupied by Israel. In 1980, the Israeli consul in Bombay Yousef Hassen, in an interview to a newspaper, stated, 'there was a strong Muslim-Arab lobby in New Delhi and the Arab ambassador was making use of Indian Muslims to bring pressure to bear on the government'¹⁰. He also opined that Israel was getting a bad press in India because the press was following the official line, and that India as competing with Pakistan to impress Arabs. All this was considered objectionable by the Indian government and the Israeli consul was expelled. The expulsion was severely criticized by B.J.P, who maintained a pro-Israeli stand. The then BJP vice president Ram Jethmalani called it an uncivilized act and suggested that the better option was to request the appointing state to recall the diplomat¹¹. Later, Subramanyam swamy, an ardent advocate of Indo-Israeli friendship deputy leader of the Janata party, pleaded with the government to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and to take the initiative in bringing about a settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians¹². His plea was turned down by the then external affairs minister, P.V.Narshima Rao.

Rao's Compulsions:

Narsimha Rao's decision of full diplomatic relations with Israel was hailed by BJP. The then BJP spokesman applauded Rao's decision

for achieving a stated aim they had failed to realize when the party in its Jan Sangh incarnation shared power in the late 1970's¹³. It was in fact the doctrine of Hindutva that paved the way for India's closer relations with Israel in the beginning of the 1990s. The Bharatiya Janata party leader, Mr. L.K.Advani, supported erstwhile cherished goal of B.J.P for having full diplomatic relations with Israel. He said that the government of India had taken a step in the right direction in supporting the UN General Assembly rescinding the 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism ¹⁴.

The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) leader A.B. Vajpayee was more than happy with the decision of establishing the diplomatic relations with the Zionist State¹⁵. The then party president, Murali Manohar Joshi also welcomed the decision and observed that there was no reason for withholding the decision given the fact that even Egypt had accepted and accorded full diplomatic recognition to Israel 15 years back and argued that the real reason for the delay was, "the apprehensions of Muslim votes in India"¹⁶. Like wise, Shiv Sareen, the president of All India Hindu Mahasabha hailed the decision and said that it was necessary to counter the influence of Islamic bloc on India¹⁷. The statement fully expresses the mindset of the R.S.S thinking and their leader.

The BJP, and more broadly, the Sangh Parivar, has an acute and long-standing obsession with Israel. Establishing full relations with Israel was always a distinctive part of the Jana Sangh-BJP's agenda. Indeed, when RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras was asked in late 1991-after India's turn towards economic neoliberalism-what's the one thing he wanted from the soft-on-the-BJP Narsimha Rao government, he unhesitatingly answered; Full-scale diplomatic relations with Israel¹⁸. While the Communist Party of India condemned the Rao Government's move and decision and commented that, it was a step in haste ¹⁹.

For over a decade, successive Israeli governments were trying to initiate and develop deeper and wide-ranging cooperation and collaboration with India in economic and defense fields to serve their geo-economic and geo-political interests. From the Indian side, L.K.Advani has always been a strong advocate of such relations with Israel; for, in any event, Advani's own political party and other like-minded radical Hindu parties saw in Israel a valuable strategic partner on the grounds of the mutually common anti-Muslim agenda. But now that L.K.Advani and his BJP is fully in command of Indian decision-making for the first time after independence, the Vajpayee government has shifted its foreign policy focus from Arab nations to Israel²⁰. Once its embassy was established in New Delhi. Israel began to cultivate Indian politicians of all hues in order to give greater content to its

relations with India. However, the various parties rebuffed these overtures, except the BJP, which shared Israel's anti-Arab and anti-Muslim perceptions.

BJP Government and its Moves:

The 'turning point' of Indo-Israeli relations came in 1998 when elections led to a political change in the country (India). The long rule of congress party, with its socialist outlook, lost to the BJP, the extremist Hindu party and Atal Behari Vajpayee became the prime minister of India. Home minister and the deputy Prime Minister, L.K.Advani, the strong man in the party is a great admirer of Israel. Ever since Indo-Israeli relations progressed rapidly from agricultural sector to defense²¹. Vajpayee after becoming Indian prime minister met his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in NewYork when both were there on the eve of United Nations session. Both agreed to exchange the visits in order to develop the bilateral relations further²². After Atal Behari Vajpayee Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra visited Israel in September 1999. He had meetings with Israeli officials, leaders on various aspects of bilateral cooperation in multiple fields. This visit provided a major boost to the Indo-Israeli relationship²³. This relationship has assumed much significance after the Kargil crisis-1999 with avenues of cooperation in security, defense and technology sectors opening up. During the Kargil conflict, Israel

was one of the countries to extend a lot of backstage help to the BJP's coalition government of India, on various aspects from information sharing to strategic consultations²⁴. It was only when the BJP came to power in 1998 that India took some steps towards the normalizing the relations with Israel by sending ministers of high rank such as L.K.Advani, Jaswant Singh and other military officials to strengthen the relations from Agricultural sector to Defense ²⁵.

The BJP government in India has made a paradigm shift from cultivating the Arab world towards a strategic partnership with Israel. This shift became evident from a series of high level visits by senior Indian governments officials like Advani, who visited Israel in 2000 during a high profile tour that took him also to UK and France. His mission was to develop international cooperation in controlling the terrorism²⁶. L. K. Advani, a hard liner closely associated with the BJP's past campaign against the 'appeasement' of India's 200 million Muslims, visited Israel in June 2000. Advani became the first senior member of Indian government to visit Israel since the normalization of the ties in 1992. Foreign policy watchers in India have been talking about the NDA government's tilt. After Advani's visit to Israel. Jaswant Singh became the first Indian foreign minister who visited Israel in July 2000. During his visit to Israel, both the countries decided to setup a Joint Commission to steer their relationship in the economic,

scientific, energy and cultural spheres. Jaswant Singh and his Israeli counterpart David Levy both agreed to establish a Joint Forum for combating terrorism. During the visit, Jaswant Singh proclaimed:²⁷

Israel is the only country helping India to combat the Pakistani aided terrorism along its northern border. Neither the United States nor the European Union is prepared to condemn Pakistan or assist India to combat the threat. Israel is the only country willing to transfer high technology to India.

He further argued²⁸ 'we were thrown out of the loop of West Asia, particularly in the post Gulf War scenario. We have been now drawn in to the process of peace here. It is a beginning'

Until 1992 when New Delhi established diplomatic relations with Israel, at the time, prime minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin and the foreign minister Shimon Peres had played well to Hindu extremist sentiments and stressed on the need for India and Israel to cooperate to combat the 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'terrorism'²⁹. The Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres also visited India in January 2002. He had some discussions with his Indian counterpart, Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Home minister L.K.Advani and defense minister during his visit. He disclosed that Indo-Israeli relations are witnessing the highest level of friendship since a couple of years of BJP's rule. Equating the struggle in Palestine with the

trouble in Kashmir, he stated that India and Israel were joint victims of the global scourge of terrorism. He said that India could look up on Israel as a friend in the war against terrorism³⁰. This analysis of equating trouble in Kashmir with the struggle in Palestine is appalling. Israel being occupiers of Palestinian lands had to face the wrath of Palestinian people since they had lost all hope of peaceful negotiations.

BJP after coming to rule India provided the major boost to the relations between New Delhi and Jerusalem. Along with its sister Hindu militant organization, the BJP had been critical of the pro-Arab foreign policy of Congress governments³¹ and have always been pro-Israeli. Israel was and is regarded a potential ally against the threat of Islamic militants³². Pro-Israeli Indians proclaim 'Yehudi-Hindu bhai bhai (Jews Hindu brothers)³³. Israel and America are allies for many a reasons. As for India, being a key ally along with them seems to be a ludicrous proposition. Recently, Colin Powell the US secretary of state ignoring India announced, 'Pakistan to be the "major non-NATO" ally. The B.J.P. led Indian government cut a sorry figure since its Prime Minister's oft-repeated dictum that India, "a natural ally of America" had fallen flat on its face.

So long as Congress governed India, the area of Indo-Israel cooperation remained limited to commercial and cultural exchanges³⁴. However, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after coming to power has

assiduously cultivated Israel as a friend and a military partner. Since 1998, there are constant Indo-Israeli contacts on various levels, especially in the realm of cooperation in the purchasing of Israeli arms³⁵.

When the Hindu Right government came to power in 1998, the issue of terrorism took on a new urgency, since this government was prone to depict any act of violence by a Muslim as terrorism and consequently any act of violence by a Hindu as either self-defense or the resentment of years of tyranny. In 1994, L.K. Advani, the then leader of the opposition in India and a major stake in the Hindu Right, visited Israel and has since developed warm ties with Zionist elements in the Israeli establishment. When he returned in 1995, he met Netanyahu, who presented him with a book on terrorism. Since then Advani has made it a practice to quote from that book when he speaks about terrorism, particularly the following:³⁶

‘When war gives terrorism, free society must know that they are fighting and they must reject absolutely the notion that ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’. In other words, even as this is a rather opaque quote, the PLO [for Israel] and the various Kashmiri militant groups [for India] are terrorists regardless of any political claims they may have.

Hindutva's alliance with the Jewish-Zionist state is not so strange after all, because at the ideological level Hindutva is much like Zionism, for both extol the importance of the Race-state, and both cast aspersions at the presence of a Muslim minority. If the activists of Hindutva yell 'Jao Kabristan ya Pakistan' (go to the grave yard or Pakistan) to Indian Muslims, those of radical Zionism follow Golda Meir former Israeli Prime minister, in the belief that, 'there is no such thing as a Palestinian',³⁷.

An Indian born analyst at the Zionist Freeman Centre in Houston [Texas] makes just this connection:³⁸

Islamic fascists see Bharat as a soft spot to propagate their irrational creed and foment violence. India tries to placate them. Israel expels them as it did in 1948 and 1967. This is what Bharat should do. If they hate Hindu Rashtra so much they are free to leave for dar-ul-islam'. India must learn from Israel , to act against Pakistan, for instance, in much the same way as the Israeli defense forces acts against the Palestinian authority.

After the visits of Advani and Jaswant, Mr. Shimon Peres's visit to India in January 2002 also became an occasion to cement the strategic ties between India and Israel. Both the countries seemed to be convinced they were fighting a common enemy, terrorism. At that time

Zvi Gabey, the deputy director general for Asia in the Israeli government stated that, 'we find ourselves in the same camp that fights terrorism and we have to develop our relationship according to that'. The visit of Peres was considered as the visible sign of the new phase of the Israel-India relationship. Regarding the December attack on Indian parliament, Peres argued that, ***"December 13 is not just an Indian date but a world date. Terrorism against the parliament was targeted to hit the largest democracy. Fortunately, it was stopped at the right moment. Otherwise there would have been another September 11. It is the same problem, the same terrorism"***³⁹. The B.J.P leadership taking advantage of being there in the government were hell bent on capitalizing on the volatile situation in India which was a creation of their own purport, and projecting Israel their savior. According to Rajiv Desai:⁴⁰

Unable to cope with the relentless revelations of underhand dealings, the saffronistas found an escape in the December 2002 terrorist attack on Parliament. They jumped at the opportunity and mobilized troops along the Indo-Pak border, only to disengage them eight saber-rattling months later.

In the meanwhile, it was the best moment for the Israeli arms dealers. They milched the Indian taxpayer while they sold arms worth of millions which could not provide India respite from the ongoing

militancy in many parts of the country. The solution lay somewhere else. A political process with all sincerity had to be started.

Closest to the Shimon Peres's visit to India the United States cleared the sale of the Israeli Phalcon early warning radar systems to India [a deal worth \$ one billion]. United States had earlier stopped the deal with the argument that it might escalate the tensions in the subcontinent. However, when the tensions were at war point, the United States allows the sale. Israel sees India as a vast market for its arms and as an ally against what it calls the Islamic world. The United States too is eager to see a new configuration that includes Israel and India to encircle both Islam and Communism, to dispatch the new bogeymen of the 21st century ⁴¹.

Mishra's Visit to Washington: J

After Shimon Peres's visit to India, the Indian national security advisor Bajesh Mishra visited Washington in May 2003 where he addressed the American Jewish Committee and also proposed a, United States-Israel-India axis against the Islamic fundamentalism during his address at the 97th annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee in Washington he argued:⁴²

As the main targets of international terrorism, democratic countries should form a viable alliance against terrorism and develop

the multilateral mechanisms to counter it. Such an alliance would have the political will and moral authority to take bold decisions in extreme cases of terrorist provocation. It would not get bogged down in definitional and causal arguments about terrorism. Blocking financial supplies, disrupting networks, sharing intelligence, simplifying extradition procedures—these are preventive measures which can only be effective through international cooperation based on trust and shared values. A core consisting of democratic societies has therefore to gradually emerge from within our existing coalition, which can take on international terrorism in a holistic and focused manner. It would ensure that the global campaign against terrorism is pursued to its logical conclusion and does not run out of steam, because of other pre occupations

Mishra in his address to the American Jewish Committee identified India, the United States and Israel, the main democratic societies fighting terrorism. He underscored the growing proximity between the three states. ***“We are all democracies, sharing a common vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity. Stronger India-US relations and India-Israel relations have a natural logic”***⁴³.

Brajesh Mishra considered the United States, Israel and India as the main democratic societies of the proposed alliance by him. Where is the democracy? Is it in Bush's America? Where spin doctoring and blatant false hood is flavor of the times, Mishra may not sound very off-key, but the world knows the worth of the United States democracy, where a candidate with less popular votes than his opponent was confirmed as the president by the Supreme Court with a majority of conservatives showing open prejudice against the democrats.

No body can compliment Israel of tolerance when it is openly out to commit genocide against the Palestinians in a systematic manner. More methodical than Hitler's more brash final solution. And speaking of India, where ultra-nationalist BJP, that is out to obliterate all diversities in India's teeming millions, through the communal riots, through imposing of its own hindutva brand of a state religion, through writing text books and re-writing history books, all by railroading its agenda on agitating majority, would be the last to own up Mishra's boast of plurality and tolerance ⁴⁴.

During his visit to Washington in May 2003, the Indian security national advisor, Mr. Brajesh Mishra stated that the India "is one of few nations in the world with no history of anti-Semitism". But he was perhaps ignoring that India was also one among the nations that had

been consistently anti-Zionist since the early days of its national movement under Mahatama Gandhi. It is primarily after the BJP- led alliance came to power that the Indian government has started taking an increasingly pro-Zionist stand. When he proposed for an alliance of three nations including India, Israel and US to combat the so called terrorism during his speech to the American Jewish Committee in Washington, Mr. Mishra considered India, Israel and US as the democracies with common vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity. Is it not a fact that the bulk of the Palestinian minority population was violently displaced from the area located to Israel under the UN partition plan of 1947? Is it not a fact that the Palestinian people are under the brutal occupation of Israel? Is it not a fact that more than half the 8 million Palestinian population are forced to live as refugees both inside and out side Palestine? Is it not a fact that the UN Committee on the Exercise of the inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has repeatedly raised its grave concern over the horrendous treatment of the Palestinians by the occupying Israeli defense forces? Then how Mr. Mishra claimed that Israel has been promoting Pluralism, Tolerance and Equal opportunity? It is nothing but only the BJP's fascists approach/ ideology to forge solid chains of friendship with US and Israel ⁴⁵.

Most of the Indian political parties have condemned the proposal of Mishra and attacked the ruling coalition for its 'strange and perverse' obsession with Israel. The most vocal among these has been the congress. It attacked the BJP-led government. 'Obsession with Israel on the part of the coalition government is strange and perverse--- When Israel is facing international isolation. It shows the intellectual insolvency of the government' were the words of the party spokesman S.Jaipal Reddy. He further committed that his (Mishra) statement was not inadvertent as deputy prime minister Advani had also put forward a similar formulation after September 11, 2001. Noting that strategic partnership with Israel was qualitatively different from that between India and United States. He further stated that Mishra would not have pleaded for such an alliance without prior clearance from the Prime minister. The Congress warned that a strategic partnership with Israel could upset the consensus built around the India's 'time-tested' foreign policy⁴⁶.

The Smajwadi party committed that Mishra should not have made 'such blatant statement which go against the proclaimed policy of NAM'.CPM and CPI also have accused the government of having 'completely sold-----out to the United States. It is overturning our foreign policy. It is very dangerous-----' The Communist party of India [Marxist] strongly opposed the India's move to ally with Israel

which, according the party has occupied Arab territories defying the United Nation's resolutions and grossly violated rights of the Palestinian people. The party considered the speech of the Indian National security Advisor which was addressed by him in Washington regarding the alliance of US, India and Israel for combating the terrorism as the complete shift of Indian foreign policy in the BJP –led government. It remarked the proposal of Mishra for the formulation of the alliance of the three states as the Indian offer to becoming a part of US's global strategy. The party also remarked that the Sharon government in Israel has been notorious for its brutal repressive policy towards the Palestinians. It also argued that Israel with the support of US, occupies Arab territories while defying the united nation's resolutions The party also showed strong opposition of the Indian forces in US-led policing operation in Iraq, because according to the party Washington was attempting to legitimize its aggression by dragging New Delhi into its plans. C.P.M also condemned the US efforts to drag India into its plan for occupying and policing Iraq ⁴⁷.

There were some reasons for the BJP's interest with Israel and Zionism. At first, a desire to toad up to the United States through its most important strategic ally outside Europe and isolate Pakistan, which cannot possibly ally with the Israel as an Islamic state? Secondly, the BJP shares Likud's Islam-phobia and anti-Arabism.

Thirdly hyper nationalism. The BJP is fascinated by the highly militarized, tough-as-nails nature of Israeli society and by its willingness to use massive force against the Palestinians whom it treats as terrorists and sub-human vermin, pure and simple. This closely parallels what some people in the Parivar would like to do to India's own religious minorities ⁴⁸.

Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra when visited United States in 2003, not only talked about the terrorism but also argued for an anti-terrorism axis. The same arguments regarding the terrorism were drawn by the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon during his visit to India in September 2003. *"There are no doubt the watershed events of 9/11 and the global campaigns against world terrorism have created a new opportunity to create stronger ties between India, Israel and the United States. We are talking about a trilateral strategic triangle, combining efforts and joining hands to combat terrorism in Asia, where we see a large rise in terror activity, particularly of the radical Islamic brand"* were the words of a senior official accompanied Ariel Sharon during his visit to India in September, 2003⁴⁹.

Ariel Sharon's visit to New Delhi in September 2003 took place at a critical juncture when the entire strategic calculus in the West Asia and South Asia stands totally changed due to the events of September

11, the Afghanistan war and the Gulf war 2nd. Professor Martin Sherman in an article in the Jerusalem Post on February 28, 2003 argued, 'an alliance between India and Israel openly endorsed by the United states would create a potent stabilizing force in the region and could contribute significantly toward facing down the force of radical extremism so hostile to American interests in Western and Central Asia'. He further pointed out there were major considerations beyond regional stability that made a strong case for a vibrant India-Israel axis. For instance in the emerging balance of geo-strategic power, the growing Chinese challenge to the United States primacy will almost invariably dictate the need for a regional counter weight to Chinese domination. Similar views on meeting the Chinese challenge were expressed by Lloyd Richardson of the Hudson Institute, a think tank very close to the US administration, when he said that India is the most over looked of our potential allies in a strategy to contain China⁵⁰. In Sherman's opinion it was China, enemy no.1 of India and all efforts according to him should be made to contain China not Pakistan.

India and Israel were among the few countries, which enthusiastically applauded President Bush's declaration of the war on terror with its famous injunction with us or with the terrorists. It was in the context of the war on terror that the strategic relationship of India with Israel and the United States developed dramatically through

defense and security cooperation ⁵¹. It was just a coincidence natural that both Israel and the United States found a partner in the Indian government because of its ideological commitment to militaristic policy.

Washington gave its special blessings to the Israel-India strategic alliance when it gave the clearance to Israel to sell their powerful Phalcon Airborne Warning and control system to India .The United States calculates that the system will serve also its own interests. It has openly stated that any strengthening of India's military capability is in America's interest. Despite the reiteration of India's unwavering support to the Palestinian cause during the visit of Palestinian foreign minister Nabeel Shaath just a few days ago, the Red carpet welcome to Ariel Sharon sends a clear signal of India's approval of Sharon's policies. An Israeli commentator Lev Grinberg wrote in June 2002, anticipating the United States invasion of Iraq, Sharon is deeply satisfied with Bush's Middle East Plan that practically means a global war managed by the Busharon team in which Bush will play the role of the global sheriff imposing a new order in the Islamic states. Sharon has been nominated as the regional sheriff and allowed to impose a new order in his area of influence.

The high profile welcome by the Indian government to the regional sheriff is another clear illustration of India's subjugation of its

national interests to the United States strategic designs for Asia⁵². Rolling out the red carpet for Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon during his visit to India the BJP-led government solidarized itself with Sharon's ever-widening repression of the Palestinian people. In pursuit of closer ties with both the Zionist state and the Bush Administration, India's BJP government has repeatedly drawn a parallel between the United States, Israel and India, claiming that the three are 'Frontline' states in the battle against Islamic and state sponsored terror. Sharon's visit concluded with the issuing of a joint Indo-Israeli statement that claimed the two countries share common goals of advancing peace, security and stability in Asia and defeating the 'global terrorist' 'As victims of terrorism', declared the statement, 'Israel and India are partners in the battle against this scourge----- call upon the international community to take decisive action against this global menace, and condemn states and individuals who aid and abet terrorism-----',⁵³. Thousands of people across the country took the streets to protest Sharon's visit. Many held placards such as Butcher Sharon, Go back, and Go back. The protests extended from Kashmir in the North to Chennai in the south. Most opposition parties had issued joint statement denouncing the visit and urging support for the protests⁵⁴. But the Prime Minister of India described the visit of the Israeli premier as "historic". The Israeli Deputy Prime Minister,

Yosef Lapid, who was along the Israeli premier during his visit to India remarked regarding the visit as, 'I think our visit can be described as a breakthrough---- your government out of consideration of your ties with Arab world was very moderate in proclaiming ties with Israel more openly. It seems as if we have reached a critical mass where there is no fence in hiding any more that we are on a friendly path'. In anticipation of Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon's visit to India, a perceptive scholar on Israel and Zionism wrote:⁵⁵

Blind and short sighted support to Israel and ignoring Sharon's brutal actions represent an ideological shift for India. Meanwhile the Arab world looks on at India's indiscrete and hasty dealings with these military entrepreneurs. A basketful of dollars spent on high technology weapons from Israel will bring in truckload of wrath from Arab Muslim world. Learning to fight terrorism from a racist, terrorist state is unethical. Even if it is diplomatically convenient.

A senior columnist Mr. Praful Bidwai remarked that it was perversion of India's foreign policy when B.J.P allowed criminal Sharon to visit India. Sharon has been indicted by the Israeli Judicial Commission for his act of genocide in Sabra and Chatilla camps in Lebanon.

In order to combat the terrorism the three states, viz, United States, Israel and India met in a conference which was sponsored by the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in New Delhi in the month of February 2003. The conference issued a joint statement:⁵⁶

India, Israel and the United States are united by a shared commitment to democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet all three are confronted by terrorism in its multiple forms-----there can be no justification for any form of terrorism, no cause can justify it ----India, Israel and America and other countries have been victims of terrorism for many years. But it took the events of September 11, 2001 to convince many that concerted action to confront this global menace is necessary. So, while we applaud the success in Afghanistan-- - the menace of terrorism persists across the world. The ultimate threat to humanity is the combination of terrorism and Weapons of mass destruction.

The conferees agreed that, the United States, India and Israel as sister democracies and common victims of international terrorism should pool their resources and experiences in dealing with this menace and create a trilateral mechanism to promote cooperation and

concerted action against terrorism. The conferees also stated that all three countries have been victims of terrorism----.All three must take appropriate action against those who fund, incite, train or give safe haven to terrorists.' Nothing could be more farcical and blatant negation of realities. It was simple obstinacy on the part of the leadership of B.J.P that they were ready to be a party to the imperialist Zionist alliance, which always worked against the democratic aspirations of the third world people.

The B.J.P leadership was incapable of analyzing the political situation and the uncontrolled outrage arising out of the fall of the World Trade Centre. Though, no body would condone this ghastly act. It is unimaginable for the citizens of independent sovereign country like India to heed to the warnings enunciated by Mr. Bush.

India was once called the leader and a major force in NAM and a bulwark against imperialism. Much has changed since then. Imperialism is perhaps stronger than ever, but the world is muddier and more confused and the Indian government under BJP, has clearly abandoned any effort to project itself as anti-imperialist in any way. In the past few years, the NDA government has systematically dismantled the entire edifice of the independent foreign policy based on non-alignment, which was created in the post-independence period.⁵⁷

The long, term strategic purpose of the United States in building up its alliance with India is really to contain and possibly eventually destroy the growing power of China in Asia and in the world. 'China represents the most significant threat to both countries security in the future as an economic and military competitor'. The United States relations with its traditional allies in Asia-South Korea and Japan have become fragile and India emerged as a vital component of United States strategy. China's rapid military modernization and its impressive economic growth are seen as threats by both United States and India' discloses a report from Pentagon and also the Jane's foreign report.⁵⁸

India's decision not to send troops to Iraq but confirmed that this decision of India would not affect its important strategic partnership with New Delhi ⁵⁹.Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of staff general Richard Myer stated that the refusal of India for sending troops to Iraq does not bother United States. He further stated that the US-India military cooperation would continue to increase. He also praised the India's cooperation in the global war against terrorism during his visit to India in August, 2003⁶⁰.The creation of United States- India institute for strategic policy in Washington is the outcome of a series of quiet meetings between the United States and Indian governments, which have also pushed all the military cooperation. Inspite of the Indian government's desire to send troops to Iraq intense pressure was

mounted by the people of India and the Opposition against this move. The government could do nothing but abandon the initiative towards sending the troops to Iraq.

Iraq has been not only friendly to India but also has stood by her on Kashmir issue. The bulk of trade India had with Iraq prior to its invasion is uncomparable with Israel. B.J.P government obsessed with Israel and USA so-called strategic allies did not bother to count this Iraqi factor.

On the first anniversary of the attack on the Indian Parliament the United States ambassador Mr. Blackwill visited the Parliament House on 13 December 2002. To paid floral tributes to the men who died during the attack on Indian parliament on December 12, 2001. He used the occasion to exhort:⁶¹

What could be a more appropriate occasion than this to repeat with full voice and strong heart that India and the United states are together in the war against terrorism. That war will not be won until all terrorism against India and America is ended permanently.

But the United States since the September 11 has belied Indian hopes of a strategic United States-Israel- India axis fighting Pakistan. The United States instead made Pakistan a front-line ally in its fight

against the Taliban in Afghanistan. One should not forget that Taliban was American creation. Bush and other United States officials have often praised India's bugbear, Musharaf, as a stalwart ally and helped him to bring Pakistan back on the path of economic prosperity⁶².

Now the so-called war on terror brought forth a strange coalition of three countries, which consider themselves as an axis against the terrorism. Strictly speaking, the coalition of the three countries viz, United States, Israel and India is nothing but curious progeny of a spurious theory—Clash of civilizations (Samuel Huntington). The Hindus, Jews and Christians versus the Moslems of the world today and the Confucians of China tomorrow. This is nothing but an alliance of dangerous consequences. This is an axis that has been in the making for a while now ever since the quasi-fascist Hindu chauvinists came to power in India a few years ago. The events of September 11, 2001 have seen the entry of India as the Bush's favorite vassal in the region. The blooming of Indo-Israel romance has merely helped seal this dubious deal between three very different countries. What is even more horrific about this emerging Axis of the dangerous consequences is that all of them today harbor elements that have classic Nazi-like inventions towards a liberal and saner world.

In the United States, there are those who talk of nuking Meca who are dangerously close to the powers-that-be. In Israel, the extreme

right wing would like to ethnically cleanse the West Bank and Gaza of its Palestinian people. In India, the state sponsored pogrom in the state of Gujarat two years ago depicts the characteristic of this regime. At the national level, echoing the practices of the Nazis, the current Indian regime has systematically re-written history text books and cooked up archaeological evidence to suit its Fanciful theories about India's past, persecuted religious minorities and sent storm troopers to physically intimidate its critics. According to Satya Sagar⁶³, the Israel and India delude themselves about being invited to sup with the Super power for the latter they are both a highly dispensable duo. Mere Client states to be disposed off with when their utility is over. Israel as the United State's best bulldog in the turbulent Arab world, to keep an eye on those precious oil reserves. India the dumb, shortsighted elephant to be suckered in to conflict with the Chinese dragon some day. The axis is a strange menagerie of a bulldog, elephant and man-eating tiger that the United States has currently become. A tiger that has always had permanent interests, never permanent friends.

According to George W Bush administration the attack on Afghanistan followed by the attack on Iraq and the warning of further attacks on Iran and Syria are considered a fight against terrorism. The president's appeal that they must unite to end the terrorism from the whole cosmos stationed him in the front row of this battle, but a glance

in to the history of America reveals that a good number of terrorist activities are run by America directly or indirectly. The American administration certainly has double standards when applying the label terrorist as the full support extended by the United States to Israel in occupied territories proves the point. The word terrorist can no where be more aptly applied than to America's unwanted presence in Afghanistan, in Iraq and help to Israel's regime of terror on the Palestinians. Was not the horrible atomic bombardment on Hiroshima and Nagasaki an act of terror? Was not the attack on Libya a terrorist act? Was not US interference in Iran and naked aggression on Afghanistan acts of terrorism? The recent subjugation of Iraq by U.S.A has revealed the real face of terrorism and has proved as to who is a terrorist.⁶⁴

Thus India-Israel –US axis is fundamentally an endorsement of the imperialistic designs of the U.S.A and Israel serves the imperialistic-Zionist interests. The US war on terror is an imperialist war.

The basic logic behind the theme of India, the United States and Israel being prime targets of terrorism having a common enemy and requiring joint action is deeply flawed as the United States and Israel are aggressors and India is an aggrieved party. What is common is the determination not to look at the root cause of terrorism and what joins

them in action is the conviction that military action is the only response irrespective of the causes of terrorism.

The axis is more specifically a blanket support for US policy in the West Asia. An Israeli commentator Lev Grinberg wrote in June 2002 anticipating the US invasion of Iraq: 'Sharon is deeply satisfied with Bush's Middle East Plan and practically means a global war managed by the 'Busharon' team in which Bush will play the role of the global Sheriff, imposing a new order in the Islamic states. Sharon has been nominated as the regional Sheriff and allowed to impose a new order in his area of influence. It was the regional Sheriff who was given the Red Carpet well comes in New Delhi on September 09, 2003⁶⁵.

By joining the axis India under BJP, has let down the Palestinian people. There was no reference to India's support for a Palestinian state in Vajpayee's speech at the banquet in honor of Sharon. The absence of reference to even the US sponsored road map was conspicuous in the Joint statement. The proforma reiteration of India's unwavering support to the Palestinian cause during the hastily arranged visit of Palestinian foreign minister Nabeel Shaath sounded even hollower after Sharon's visit.

To be a friend of Israel apparently means something quite simple. As Tony Smith observes in his authoritative study, 'The power

of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy' (Harvard), the meaning is that, 'Israel alone should decide the terms of its relations with its Arab neighbors and the US, should endorse those terms whatever they may be'⁶⁶.

The delusion about a new strategic equation that would dominate the geographical region between the two countries will only create tensions and instability in Asia. It will lead to a major shift in the balance of power not only in the Indian sub continent but also in the Middle East and the rest of Asia.

Projecting Israel as a model will be detrimental to the democratic and secular character of India. References made in the Joint declaration to India and Israel being democracies and having gained independence and embarked on nation building are unpardonable distortions of history. What is the comparison between India and Israel? Israel is a settler colonialist state having gained independence by military occupation and which embarked on nation building by more brutal occupation.

References to 'civilizational relationship between India and Israel will invariably be seen as subscribing to the thesis of Samuel P Huntington's clash of civilizations and will be treated as the basis for anti- Islamic alliance. This has serious domestic implications. Panchajanya, the RSS mouthpiece Says, *"Both India and Israel are*

facing Muslim terrorism. Israel has faced the threat from Muslim terrorists boldly and effectively and we should appreciate it”⁶⁷.

The axis will undermine India’s position in the United Nations where it will be expected to vote for Israel, a state, which has consistently defied the United Nations. Commenting on Sharon’s visit, the Israeli daily Haaretz called upon India ‘to translate its openness towards Israel into changes in its voting patterns of the United Nations. Up to now India has automatically cast its ballot with the pro-Arab majority’. Rather than improving India’s chances of getting permanent membership in the Security Council, the axis may weaken its claim

It will complicate India’s relations with China as both Israel and US want to project India as a regional counterweight to China’s domination. The alliance will be used by the US in its strategy to contain China. This will not be conducive to peace in the region. India’s strategic objectives and interests will be made subservient to US designs in Asia ⁶⁸.

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Chapter-6

Conclusion

The tragic partition of Palestine by the United Nations gave birth to the Zionist state-Israel. After its creation, the United Nations accepted Israel as its 59th member. India's great nationalist leaders like Gandhi and Nehru rejected the Zionist claim to Palestine. They strongly opposed the creation of Israel and its membership to the United Nations. India, a member of the United Nations Special commission on Palestine UNSCOP, rejected the 'majority report' prepared by it, which recommended the partition of Palestine. India with Yugoslavia and Iran recommended 'minority report' which suggested an independent Palestine as a federal state with Jerusalem as its capital. However, the minority report was rejected by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Nehru always supported the Palestinian cause. He always supported Palestine as an Arab country. He viewed Israel as an Imperialist creation. But on 17 September 1950 India formally recognized the state of Israel. The decision to recognize Israel was a mark of respect to the institution of United Nations. He argued that the recognition could not be deferred for a long time because the United Nations, which had accepted the state of Israel, could treat the deferment of Israel's recognition as an act of defiance.

After approving recognition to Israel the then Indian government allowed Israel to open a consulate in Bombay but the diplomatic

relations were not established. Though the recognition of Israel was granted but the Indian government continued to support the Palestinian cause. She always supported the Palestinian struggle.

Though India maintained a consistent policy towards the then crisis in the region, there were certain groups of people who did not see eye to eye with the government. The Hindu Mahasabha represented them. They always criticized the Nehru government for withholding the recognition of Israel. They willfully ignored the fact that Israelis are the occupiers with imperialistic, colonialist ideology. Nevertheless, India being anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism her support to the Palestinian struggle was obvious.

Taking recognition as a welcome gesture, the Israeli government made some efforts for establishing diplomatic relations with India. But the then Indian Prime minister rejected those efforts and also refused to normalize relations with Israel. The Jansangh and other likeminded groups however considered Israel as a democratic state in the region and always demanded for having the diplomatic relations with the Zionist state. The Jansangh perhaps was deliberately ignoring the fact that the so-called democratic state was established at the expense of the majority of Palestinians, an act quite opposite to the basic principles of democracy.

India's West Asian policy was greatly influenced by her relations with the Arabs and the Arab Nationalist movements. The Egyptian revolution of 1952 created a new dimension in Indo-Arab relations, which had a chain reaction to her attitude towards Israel. Egyptian government's opposition to imperialism, qualified by non-alignment, found a place with Indian foreign policy makers. India and Egypt's consistent opposition to all forms of imperialism intrigues and maneuvers led to their attacks on the Baghdad pact. Their common policy brought both India and Egypt closer.

India's relations with Egypt had a major role in her policy towards Israel. When the Israelis in collaboration with Britain and France launched an attack on Egypt on October 29, 1956. The Nehru government strongly condemned the Israeli action and branded it as a case of clear naked aggression. He also supported the nationalization of Suez Canal by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

India also showed strong reactions against Israel in June war of 1967. India being a non-aligned country was reluctant towards accepting the aggressive policy of Israel and condemned the Israeli attacks and American policy towards the Arabs. Due to Israeli belligerence of 1967 on Arab world, India decided to break off relations even at consulate level with Israel as an immediate measure

and she extended moral support to the deprived Arabs who were the victims of Israeli aggression.

However, the opposition leaders from Jan Sangh and other likeminded parties criticized the government's stand. They argued that India's unnecessary support to the Arabs could encourage them (Arabs) to adopt more hostile attitude towards Israel. It is ironic that they were ignoring the fact that Arabs were not hostile to Israel but it was Israel, which was very much hostile to the Arabs. The Jansangh also argued that Indian leadership was succumbing to Arab pressure in a bid to appease them and thought Israel to be a worthwhile force in the region and a symbol of stability. However, they conveniently forgot that Israel was and still remains the greatest destabilizing factor in the region.

Again, when a war broke out in the region in 1973, India strongly condemned the Israeli aggression and affirmed that the cause of the tension in the area was the Israeli aggression and its refusal to vacate the territories, which had been occupied by her by the armed forces and supported the Arab cause, which was based on justice and demanded immediate implementation by Israel of the United Nations resolutions for peaceful solution of the problem.

Meanwhile the Janta party came to power in 1977. Moshe Dayn the former Israeli foreign Minister visited India during the Janta party's rule. The main reason behind his visit was to seek the

diplomatic relations with India. But he could not fulfil his dreams because the then Indian Prime Minister Mr. Desai rejected his (Dayan's) proposals. Dayan returned back angrily as the Indian prime minister Mr. Morarji Desai suggested him for withdrawing from all the Occupied Territories for an independent Palestinian state. Nevertheless, Janta Party's unequivocal support to Palestinian cause did not allow the normalization of relations with Israel, inspite of the attempts of its foreign minister Mr. Vajpayee with R.S.S mindset to accommodate Israel even at the expense of the Palestinians. After a couple of years of rule, Mrs.Indra Gandhi's Congress party again replaced the Janta government in 1980.

There was another war in the region in 1982. India treated the atrocities committed by Israeli military during the war as very much horrific and condemnable. She condemned Israel's infamous history of misdeeds and stressed for the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians for establishing durable peace in the region. The then Israeli consul in India Yosef Hassen criticized against the Indian protocol for being the proArab and succumbing to their pressure. As a result, the Israeli consul was directed to leave the country within hours.

It was Rajiv Gandhi, after the death of his mother-Mrs. Indra Gandhi, reopened Israeli consul that was lying vacant since 1982. He held some meetings with the Jewish leaders when he visited USA. But

these meetings could also not lead to the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two states.

After the death of Rajiv Gandhi Narsimha Rao became the Prime minister of India. During his rule, the extension of the diplomatic relations to Israel was almost a decree since there was no debate on this issue in the parliament or outside. The decision came as a rude surprise to millions of Indians who had uptill now steadfastly held to the view, first evacuation of occupied territories, second creation of the state of Palestine and finally extension of diplomatic relations with Israel. The very premise of the Indian foreign policy was turned upside down by this decision.

According to some analysts, the end of cold war, disintegration of the former USSR, emergence of USA as the only super power, Gulf war of 1991 and the Madrid Conference forced Narsimha Rao to take this hasty and immature step of establishing diplomatic relations with the Zionist state. Before this, Narsimha Rao government in 1991 voted for the revocation of the United Nations Resolution of 3379 of November 1975 that had equated Zionism with Racism. Some analysts argued that this step paved the way for Narshima Rao to establish the diplomatic relations in 1992. Narsima Rao's decision was hailed by B.J.P. The B.J.P leader Mr. Vajpayee was more than happy with the decision. Like wise, Shiv Sareen, the president of All Hindu

Mahasabha hailed the decision. The BJP and more broadly, the sangh parivar, have an acute and long-standing obsession with Israel. Establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel was always a distinctive part of the Jansangh- BJP's agenda. While the communist party of India condemned the Rao governments move and decision and commented that, it was a step in haste. Moreover, the decision was taken without taking Indian public opinion into account. India's long cherished principled stand against racism was thrown to winds overnight.

When the diplomatic relations were established, some claimed that Chandra Swami was instrumental in the process, others that it was part of a process of wooing the US, Israel's mentor. The government claimed it was a key element in India's overall West Asian strategy which had been devastated by its less-than categorical stand on Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was said that the move would get India a seat at the West Asian peace talks. Relations with Israel are part of a process that began in the early 1980s when Indra Gandhi moved towards the US and began to open up the economy. Under Rajiv Gandhi, the idea of a step-by-step approach was given official sanction. However, an official in the then government argued, "Events overtook us". West Asian peace process got under way, aided by the shift in the power balance following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Iraq was

neutralized and Syria, Israel's remaining great antagonist, sided with the US.

If India were to make a decision primarily on the criterion of Israel's West Asian attitude, there was and there still is no case at all for establishing the diplomatic relations. True, all of them have begun talking but Israel continues to hold out and is in illegal occupation of an entire country and parts of others. It is getting what was denied to it without an inch or an ounce of concession. There are those who argued that if India can have diplomatic relations with China and Pakistan, who are supposed to be in occupation of our land, what is the problem in having ties and yet opposing the policies of some one who is occupying not our but some body else's territories. The argument used by the BJP leaders is utterly amateurish. For one thing, India's ties with China were reopened precisely to talk and iron out problems peacefully just as the Arabs and Israel have now decided to. More important, Israel is in occupation of an entire country whose creation was legitimized by the world's premier International body, is stealing all its water and is in the process of appropriating occupied lands through illegal settlements being allotted to immigrants welcomed on the basis of religion. A doctrine diametrically opposed to what India professes to stand for.

After establishing the diplomatic relations, the two states began to have military collaborations. Before the establishment of the diplomatic relations, there were very limited military contacts between the two countries. But after the establishments of the diplomatic relations there have been several visits, contacts and consultations related to the military field, between the two countries. There are some who also argued that India would like to benefit from the Israeli experience in antiterrorist operations. However, they willfully ignored that Palestinian struggle for liberation was not an act of terrorism. Secondly even if it was Israel until now had been an alter failure to curb it. Weapons certainly are no solution to suppress a struggling people. Shimon Peres former foreign minister also raised the issue of terrorism and fundamentalism when he was on a visit to India in 1993. During his visit, he also raised his hands to support India regarding the Kashmir Issue and the Shimla Agreement.

Mr. Peres was perhaps ignoring the fact that it was the PLO chairman -Mr.Yasser Arafat who played a significant role in bringing both India and Pakistan closer to each other, which resulted in concluding the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. As far as Peres is concerned, he has double standards on the Kashmir issue. On one occasion, he has supported the solution of Kashmir issue on the basis of the Shimla agreement and on the other occasion, he tried to

make the situation more volatile when he immaturely suggested for changing the demographic character of the Valley of Kashmir on the pattern of Palestine. He was trying to sow permanent seed of discord as he and his friends in Israel had done vis-à-vis the poor Palestinians. After Peres, Ezer Weizman former president of Israel visited India in 1996. His main aim was to push an increase in 'defense cooperation' an euphemism for the selling of arms to India under one pretext or another. During his visit, the two countries decided to exchange military attaches. One can easily surmise that Israeli supply of arms can be seen as catalyst of arms race in the region.

Almost after a year of the President Weizman's visit to India in 1996-97, the Bhartiya Janta Party BJP, after coming to power carried out the nuclear tests in 1998. That was the start of the arms race in the region because Pakistan, which is being considered a threat to the Indian security also carried out the nuclear tests in retaliation, thus becoming a nuclear power. This was a God send opportunity for Israelis to take advantage of the situation. After nuclear tests, Kargil war broke out between India and Pakistan in 1999. This war was a tremendous opportune moment for Israelis to market their military products when India was reeling under the sanctions. These weapons would put India into contention as the main power not only in South Asia, but perhaps, as the second front against the Chinese.

Furthermore, the fantasy of the missile defense shield and a nuclear capacity enables forces of Hindutva to believe that it has once again attained superiority over Pakistan- a conventional advantage that had been neutralized by the mutual nuclear tests of 1998.

Arms deals are continuously signed between India and Israel. Defense analysts estimated weapons sold to India by Israel crossed \$500 million during 1997-2000. By 2001, India signed weapons contracts worth \$2 billion with Israel. Recently Israel signed one more deal worth \$1.1 billion for selling her 'Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems' to India. From the above estimations, it is clear that India is providing the market to Israel for selling her arms worth million US dollars to India. Israeli arms exporters are treating India as conducive market, which can be exploited by them even if they sold their hardware at very high price. Indo-Israeli arms trade is unilateral, arms from Israel to India. Only the pretext is combating terrorism and fundamentalism. This is high time top echelons in the government realize and save the poor Indian taxpayers from agony. India is the biggest customer for Israel's military industry. Almost one-half of Israel's total military sales in year 2002 worth \$4.2 billion went to India. The Indian budget, therefore, subsidizes the Israeli arms infrastructure and in effect, the atrocities of the Israeli defense force. Even two generally conservative Indian analysts concur that the Indian

military does not gain immensely from the arms deals. Uday Bhasker of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, New Delhi noted regarding the arms deals as 'Israelis not doing us any favors. They drive a hard bargain'. Brahma chellaney of the Centre for Policy Research-New Delhi stated regarding the relationship as, it is a patron client relationship rather than a relationship of equals.

Other sectors of cooperation between these two states are agriculture, trade, science and technology. India is technologically sound. Its information technology and technically skilled labours are worldwide accepted. Its technological cooperation with US, Japan and other developed countries would be more beneficial to her than Israel. However, solar energy is an area the Indian experts are looking for. It is claimed that Israelis have the only workable solar power generating system in the world. This is not just for fans and tube lights but also for generating substantial amounts of power for supplying power grids. Such system is said to be working in California. The Israelis are offering India a collaborative role in a more advanced 'water tower' solar technology, which is even more effective. Agriculture is considered one more important area of cooperation between the two states. Farmers are being sent to Israel to know the Israeli techniques regarding the agriculture production and so on. Israel has utilized its marginal water resources to make the desert bloom. Its strides in

horticulture, aquaculture and floriculture and arid zone farming hold applications for India. Rajasthan and other semi-arid states have used the Israeli agricultural techniques. Indo-Israeli Research and Development Farms were inaugurated in the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, IARI at Pusa in New Delhi. It is claimed that the farm would demonstrate the Israeli expertise in high tech agriculture and would endeavor to find different techniques and methods of cultivation suitable for the diverse agro-climatic zones in India

Other sector of cooperation between two countries is trade. Since 1992, various trade agreements have been signed between these two states. Prior to 1992, there was little direct trade between India and Israel. However, after establishing the diplomatic relations the trade between these two countries has been growing. Since the establishment of the diplomatic relations, agreements and treaties like Memorandum of Understanding MOU, Most Favored Nation Status MFN, Double taxation treaty DTT, and so on have been signed between the two states. The bilateral trade is almost limited to two major items in both states. That is, rough diamonds and chemicals together form about 63% of Israel's exports to India. While as the polished diamonds and cotton yarn account for approximately 76% of Indian exports to Israel. In 1992 that is, after the establishment of diplomatic relations, the total bilateral trade reached \$186 million and in 1999 it reached \$1004 and

in 2000, the total bilateral trade touched \$1009 million. Apart from the diamonds, the other main Israeli exports to India are the military arms, which are being sold to India worth million US dollars. These arms, which Israel is exporting to India, can strangle/ garrotte the industrial development since huge amount is being wasted on the purchase of these Israeli arms at very high price.

On the other hand, India's trade relations with the Arabs are growing fast since decades. The oil, which is in abundance in the Arab World, has built these trade relations stronger and almost still overwhelming. Almost the GCC countries including Iran presently account for almost all the India's oil imports. Moreover, three million Indian workers are working in the Gulf States. Their remittances, which India is receiving in billion dollars per annum strengthening Indian economy. While the Israeli arms, which are being imported worth million US dollars, is emaciating the Indian economy as huge amount is being utilized in importing these arms. However, these arms are being imported on the pretext to curb the so-called terrorism and fundamentalism

The Hindutva- Sharonist alliance is not simply about the opportunistic needs of the Israeli defense industry and the Indian military, but it is also about the creation of an alliance alongside the Bush-run Pentagon against two foes: Islam (or, in the most vulgar

interpretations, the Arab states and Iran in general) and Communism (or China). "Terror is the major issue and challenge for both countries. We understand each other and we see each other in similar terms, of Islamic terrorism" were the arguments of New Delhi's Israeli Embassy Spokesman, Yaran Mayer.

Actually, Israel has been extremely successful in using the bogey of Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism to further its interests and deprive Palestinians of their legitimate rights. Even the Israeli stance on terrorism has been a tactical one. It is widely acknowledged that it was Israel, which pioneered terrorist activity in Asia. But according to Valsan Cherian, the American commentator Noam Chomsky says, the 'evil scourge of terrorism' in America and Israeli discourse refers to terrorist acts by Muslims and Arabs, but not by Zionists, just as 'peace' means settlement that honors the right of national-determination of Jews, but not of Palestinians. The goal of Israel has always been to encourage terrorism in West Asia so that Palestinians or Islamic militancy can be blamed, delaying a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question.

L.K.Advani and his own political party and other like-minded radical Hindu parties saw in Israel a valuable strategic partner on the grounds of the mutually common anti-Minority agenda. Advani feels that Israel and India should be closer to each other in the field of

defense and counter terrorism. After coming to power in 1998, the Bhartiya Janta Party took steps towards normalizing the relations with the Zionist state by sending ministers of high rank such as Advani and Jaswant Singh and other military officials to strengthen the relations with Israel. Israel's outrages against Palestinians rose just as the Bharatiya Janata Party government began wooing it. A relationship has been established, especially in purchase of military hardware. National interest, however, does not require the government to grovel before Israel and tender abject apologies for Jawaharlal Nehru's policies as Jaswant Singh did. As external affairs Minister, he spoke to the Israeli council of foreign relations in Jerusalem, on July 2, 2000, 'of a tectonic shift of consciousness'. He attributed India's policy in the past to, predictably, the Muslim vote and, at one remove, Nehru. He went to the extent of saying that it was this 'vote bank policies', which prevented the two countries from becoming natural allies. He perhaps was ignoring the fact that India being a non-aligned country could not be a natural ally of Israel, which is the occupier of other's land. Ilan Pappé a scholar of Haifa University has amplified that 'the Jews came and took, by means of uprooting and expulsion, a land that was Arab...We wanted to be a colonialist occupier, and yet to come across as moral at the same time.' As the peace loving Israeli Scholars, journalists understood the reality of their state (Israel). However, the

Indian External Affairs minister Mr. Jaswant Singh could not understand this reality.

The BJP government made a paradigm shift from cultivating the Arab world towards a strategic partnership with Israel to curb the so-called terrorism. Hindutva's alliance with the Zionist state is not so strange because at the ideological level Hindutva is much like Zionism, for both extol the importance of the Race-State and both cast aspersions at the presence of religious minorities. If the activists of Hindutva yell 'Hindu Rashtra for Hindus' against Indian religious minorities, those radical Zionists follow Golda Meir, the former Israeli Prime minister, in the belief that, 'there is no such thing as a Palestinian.'

After the visits of Advani and Jaswnt Singh to Israel in 2000, Mr. Shimon Peres again visited India in 2002. He had played well to Hindu extremist sentiments and stressed on the need for India and Israel to cooperate to combat the so called 'Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism'. During his visit, he disclosed that Indo-Israeli relations are witnessing the highest level of friendship since e a couple of years of the BJP's rule. He further argued that India could look up on Israel as a friend in the war against the terrorism. He also made some comments regarding the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament, only to keep the flow of Israeli arms continue to India. The BJP

leadership taking advantage of being there in the government was hell bent on capitalizing on the volatile situation in India, which was a creation of their own purport, and projecting Israel their savior. According to an analyst the saffronistas, which were unable to cope with the relentless revelations of underhand dealings, found an escape in the December 2002 attack on Parliament and jumped at the opportunity and mobilized troops along the Indo-Pak border only to disengage them eight saber-rattling months later.

After Shimon Peres, the Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon visited India in September 2003. During his trip to India, he also raised the same bogey of so called 'terrorism and fundamentalism', which had been already raised by all those who had visited each other's country. He also argued some measures for combating the terrorism during his discussions with the Indian officials including Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee. It is an irony that a person who himself is a war criminal and a terrorist gave some tactics to the Indian government and supported the proposals of Mr. Mishra for making an axis comprising of three states viz India, Israel and US for dealing with the terrorism and fundamentalism.

It was the Indian National security Mr. Brajesh Mishra who proposed for an axis between India, Israel and US for combating the so-called terrorism, during his visit to Washington in May 2003. He

considered these three states as democratic with common vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity. He perhaps ignored the fact that world knows the worth of the US democracy, where a candidate with less popular votes than his opponent was confirmed as the president by the Supreme court with a majority of conservatives showing open prejudice against the democrats. George W. Bush's elevation to the US presidency by the decision of the Supreme Court to stop the re-count of the deeply flawed ballots in the state of Florida where his brother, Jeb, happened to be Governor and thus award him the White House, had even then felt like a Judicially- Sanctioned Coup d'etat.

No body can compliment Israel of tolerance when it is openly committing genocide against the Palestinians in a systematic manner. More methodical than Hitler's more brash final solution. And speaking of India, where ultranationalist BJP, that is out to obliterate all diversities in India's teeming millions, through the communal riots, through imposing of own hindutva brand of a state religion, through writing text books and re-writing history books, all by railroading its agenda on agitating majority, would be the last to own up Mishra's boast of plurality and tolerance.

During the same address Mishra also pointed out that all the three states viz, India, US and Israel have some 'fundamental

similarities' and are 'natural allies'. Further, more the relationship between these three states bears a 'natural logic'. What seems 'natural' in the world of geopolitical alliances may not seem so obvious to the citizenry of the states in question. 'India', Mishra noted correctly, is one of the 'very few countries with no history of anti-Semitism'. However, the foreign policy of India has been strongly opposed to Israeli intransigence on the question of the Palestinians.

Actually these speeches indicate BJP's interests in supporting US president's 'global war on terrorism' which was launched by United States supported by other countries after the World trade centre and Pentagon were attacked on 11 September, 2001. India offered whole support even not asked for, to Bush's call of 'global war on terrorism'. In his fateful speech of 20th September 2001, Bush referred to this 'war' as 'a task that never ends' and one that might be fought in as many as fifty or sixty countries. He further argued that, 'any country that does not actively concede to US demands, whatever they may be, shall be deemed a friend of terrorists and shall meet the same fate: 'regime change', 'dead or alive', and so on. By his speeches Mr. Bush echoed John Foster Dulles, the rabid secretary of the Eisenhower years who said that non-alignment was 'immoral' Bush too has put the whole world on notice: 'every nation in every region has a decision to make. You are with us or you are with the terrorists', every country must join

up each time, or else it too becomes an enemy and perhaps the next target'.

A brief word about this particular form of fighting, which is called 'Terrorism'. Bush was careful enough to say that America's enemy was that particular 'terrorism' which has global reach'. In other words, he is not particularly concerned with the great many varieties of terrorism, which include the IRA in Ireland, the RSS fraternity in India. Nor is 'fundamentalism' the issue: Taliban fundamentalism is bad but fundamentalism in the entire Gulf is good, and Bush himself of course speaks the language of that Christian fundamentalism which defines the far right in the contemporary United States. 'Terrorism with global reach', the designated enemy, is the one that challenges American Power.

The BJP led government always came forward to endorse Bush's proposals whether it was the National Missile Defense Plan or the War on Global Terrorism. The Indian government was among the very first to seek membership and offered its own facilities even before Bush's own European allies or any other country on the planet. Actually, the Vajpayee government's offers of the Indian airspace and naval facilities to US were to get an upper edge over Pakistan. However, in fact it got as little out of this unilateral concession as it did from the earlier, equally abject support for the American National Missile

Defense Programmes. But Musharaf got the desired concession from Collin Powel-the US secretary of State when the latter argued that the 'Kashmir dispute should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri People'

Indian government even considers herself as a strategic and natural ally in the Bush's war of terrorism. Israel and America are allies for many a reasons. As for India, being a key ally along with them seems to be a ludicrous proposition. Recently, the US secretary of state Mr. Collin Powel ignored India by announcing Pakistan to be the 'major non-NATO' ally. Clearly, the secretary of state did not think it worthwhile to take India as a valued strategic partner of the US. By this American move, the BJP had probably lost the hopes of a strategic United-Israel-India axis fighting Pakistan.

Now, it is strange that a, 'strategic partner' should not disclose to its intimate ally that it is about to confer MNNA status upon a neighbor with whom the ally has a relationship of strategic hostility and a hot-cold war for half a century. The US decision to elevate Pakistan's status as an ally just proves that Washington's relations with New Delhi and Islamabad are not a 'Zero-Sum game'. It also proved that the BJP leader's self-Congratulatory, self serving claim to have raised India's global profile by riding the partnership with the US bandwagon was essentially hollow. Pakistan's historic involvement in

Afghanistan on the side of the Americans and its enduring geo-political location has come to haunt Jaswant Singh's dream of turning India into America's 'most allied ally', as Pakistan was once called. The BJP led Indian government cut a sorry figure since its Prime minister has oft repeated dictum that India, 'a natural ally of America' had fallen flat on its face.

The America's global war on terrorism was nothing but the implementation of her imperialistic designs over some regions. Bush's attack on the Afghanistan followed by the attacks on Iraq and warning of the attacks on Syria and Iran are her imperialistic designs for which it sought the support from the other nations. However, this war on so-called international terrorism was fully appreciated and supported by the BJP leadership without analyzing the political situation arising out of the fall of the world trade centre. However, nobody would condone the ghastly act of bombarding. They perhaps could not understand that US tries to consolidate a ring of military bases in Southwestern Asia and the Caspian states, to capture oil resources estimated to be worth over a trillion dollars and to choke both Russia and China militarily.

India was once called the leader and a major force in NAM and a bulwark against imperialism. Much has changed since then. Imperialism is perhaps stronger than ever, but the world is muddier and more confused and the Indian government under BJP, has clearly

abandoned any effort to project itself as anti-imperialist in any way. It has dismantled the entire edifice of the independent foreign policy based on non-alignment by joining with US and its major ally-Israel in the so-called war on terrorism. Even though an Israeli writer-Uri Avnery has emphasized that what the Bush administration envisions today is something Sharon has been advocating since the 1980s. B.J.P probably forgets the fact that it is the US itself were the word 'terrorist' could be more aptly applied for its unwanted presence in Afghanistan, in Iraq and help to Israel's regime of terror on the Palestinians. The American administration's full support to Israel in occupied territories proves the point more clearly. Before joining to Israel and US, the Indian government should also see the past history of the US, which is full with the terrorist activities like the horrible atomic bombardment on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Naked aggression on Afghanistan and the recent subjugation of Iraq by US has revealed the real face of terrorism and has proved as to who is a terrorist. On the other hand Israelis are the occupiers of some one else's land. While India is a non-aligned country and fought her war of independence against imperialistic and colonialist powers. So how could India be a natural ally to US and Israel, as the Vajpayee government has been saying.

BJP government also could not realize the internal policies of both Israel and US, which aimed to project India as a regional counterweight to china's domination by taking India under their own umbrellas of axis, which could be used by US in its strategy to contain China. This will not be conducive to peace in the region. India's strategic objectives and interests will be made subservient to US designs in Asia. BJP leadership should also realize that the US has 'no permanent friends only permanent interests.' The recent US subjugation firstly over Afghanistan then over Iraq has proved this point. Both were the close friends of US. The friendship remained alive until the cause of the US became full filled.

At the time Iraq made the shift, the Euro was worth 82 percents to a US dollar, today it stands at \$1.5 – gaining by 17 percent. Iraq's decision was a key element in making the Euro a competitive currency for the first time. If the other oil producing countries were to shift accordingly, the US economy would face the prospect of immense shrinkage, even collapse. For saving her economy and to bring its own people into the government in order to keep her interests alive in Iraq, it waged war against the Ba'athist regime on the pretext of 'Weapons of mass destruction', which were never found in the country. However, the Vajpayee government could not understand the US policies behind the war on so-called terrorism.

India's unseemly rush to join the US-Israel camp indicated its weakening democratic credentials and diminishing commitment to governance through consent rather than coercion, chiefly under the current dispensation.

India is a democratic polity stands dangerously diminished by its clumsy effort to be part of the US- Israel strategic nexus. In pragmatic terms too, the strategic gambit is likely to backfire, since military responses to civil conflicts never been known to produce durable results. The blooming of India under BJP and Israel romance had merely helped to seal the dubious deal between three different countries. What is even more horrific about this emerging axis of the dangerous consequences is that all of them today harbor elements that have classic Nazi like inventions towards a liberal and saner world.

The growing strategic ties between India and Israel and their cooperation in the nuclear field have created much serious concerns in the Arab world. With the Indo-Israeli strategic collaboration gaining momentum in recent years, Arab leaders are becoming more vocal and critical of it. Arab league alleged the both India and Israel have military and nuclear cooperation and warned against the consequences for the Arab world. Arab countries are worried about the growing defense cooperation between India and Israel and some countries feel that these military collaborations could have adverse impact on the

region and can jeopardize peace and security. When Advani proposed India's nuclear cooperation with Israel during his visit to the Zionist state in June 2000 the Israelis retraced. The Arab worries increased further. When Israeli Prime Minister Sharon visited India in 2003, an Arab diplomat argued that Sharon's visit could have an adverse impact on Indian diplomacy in the Arab world. Some argued that India had encouraged Israel in its aggressive policies by receiving a war criminal prime minister. Yasser Arafat commented that the Israeli prime minister's visit to India could only escalate the situation and war between Pakistan and India. Arab diplomats are also of the opinion that US could use the campaign as a pretext to establish a permanent presence in the Asian region, which has the world's largest energy reserves. They also point out that the new situation has arisen after the failure of the 'New World Order'. Some Arab diplomats argued that Israel and US can never subdue the Arabs and India is isolating herself by choosing Israel as an ally.

While the U.S. actively backs Israel, the Arabs states do no more than mouth protest. The non-aligned movement is quiescent. And, the BJP regime is all admiration for Israel, as a role model for repression.

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